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# ECONOMIC

# Affairs



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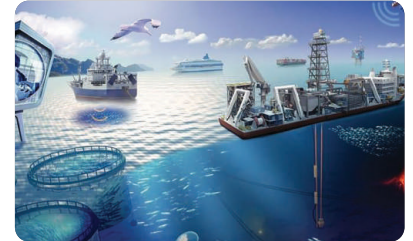
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# EDITORIAL

## Together for Peace & Prosperity

The AMAN Exercise 2023, organized by the Pakistan Navy, is of significant regional, strategic, and security importance for the Indian Ocean region. The main objectives of the exercise are to promote regional cooperation and stability, improve interoperability, and show a united resolve against threats such as terrorism, piracy, human trafficking, smuggling, and weapons proliferation in the maritime domain.

Pakistan, as a maritime nation, has substantial stakes in the maritime domain. Its extraordinary dependence on the seas for trade and its strategic location astride the global energy highway make maritime stability an important agenda of national security.

The main objective of the Aman Exercise series is to enhance regional cooperation and stability and to address the diverse threats that exist in the seas. No country can single-handedly tackle these threats, and it is only through a collaborative response by friendly navies that they can be effectively addressed.

The Aman Exercise offers a platform for the participating navies to share their experiences and best practices and to develop tactics, techniques, and procedures for combined action against asymmetric threats at sea. It also offers a unique opportunity for the navies to enhance their operational skills and improve their joint operations at sea through effective intelligence-sharing mechanisms.

Regionally, the AMAN Exercise brings together navies from friendly countries in the Indian Ocean region, fostering closer relationships and promoting greater cooperation and understanding. This regional cooperation is vital to ensuring the stability and security of the Indian Ocean, which is a critical trade and energy corridor and home to many important shipping lanes. By working together, navies can more effectively respond to the diverse and evolving threats in the region.

Strategically, the AMAN Exercise is important for enhancing the operational capabilities and readiness of the participating navies. The exercise provides an opportunity for navies to train together, exchange best practices, and develop new tactics, techniques, and procedures for addressing security challenges in the maritime domain. This increased cooperation and collaboration are essential for building a more resilient and effective maritime security network in the region.

From a security perspective, the AMAN Exercise is crucial for addressing the many challenges facing the Indian Ocean region. The exercise is designed to practice responses to threats such as piracy, terrorism, and human trafficking, and to promote greater cooperation in addressing these challenges. The exercise also provides a platform for participating navies to share intelligence, coordinate operations, and improve their capabilities for responding to a wide range of security threats.

In addition to its regional, strategic, and security importance, the AMAN Exercise is also significant for the prosperity and development of the region. The exercise is being held alongside the first-ever Pakistan International Maritime Expo and Conference (PIMEC), which is aimed at jump-starting the development of the maritime sector in Pakistan and spurring the blue economy. By

bringing together stakeholders and companies from diverse maritime fields, PIMEC will help to promote economic growth, create jobs, and address the challenges of climate change in the region.

Another aspect of the Aman Exercise 2023 is the Blue Economy, which refers to the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and jobs, while preserving the health of marine and coastal ecosystems. Blue Economy has been gaining traction globally as a new paradigm for inclusive and sustainable development, especially for coastal and island countries like Pakistan.

Pakistan's Blue Economy has great potential to contribute to economic growth, create new jobs and business opportunities, and improve the livelihoods of people in coastal and island communities. The development of ports, such as Gwadar, and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project, provides opportunities for trade, transportation and energy linkages with regional and global markets.

In the Indian Ocean region, the Blue Economy holds enormous potential for economic growth, poverty reduction, and sustainable development, but it is facing several challenges, including illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, marine pollution, coastal degradation, and climate change.

The shared knowledge and skills gained from the exercise will enhance interoperability between the participants, increasing cooperation among all the stakeholders and contributing to the development of the Blue Economy.

The AMAN Exercise is vital to maritime security and peace and prosperity in the Indian Ocean because of the importance of the Indian Ocean region in the global economy. The region is home to some of the busiest shipping lanes and is crucial to the flow of oil and other commodities that sustain the world's economy. It is also home to some of the world's most troubled and conflict-ridden countries, and the presence of non-state actors, such as pirates and terrorists, makes the region vulnerable to instability and violence.

The blue economy is the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, employment, and improved livelihoods. Pakistan's location at the crossroads of the Indian Ocean Region makes it an important player in the blue economy. The development of the blue economy will not only provide livelihood and vibrancy to the Pakistani economy but also help mitigate the effects of climate change. PIMEC will bring together stakeholders and companies from diverse maritime fields and provide a platform for them to exploit and explore the potential of the blue economy.

The development of the blue economy and the success of AMAN Exercise 2023 are both vital to the maritime security and peace and prosperity in the Indian Ocean Region. The exercise will help build regional cooperation and stability and enhance the operational skills of the participating navies. The conference will provide a platform for stakeholders to discuss and develop strategies for the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth.

- Editor

## President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan



On the occasion of first ever edition of Pakistan International Maritime Expo & Conference (PIMEC-2023), I extend a very warm welcome to all delegates, exhibitors & trade representatives and wish them productive engagements during the event. This Exhibition will showcase the untapped potential of Pakistan's Maritime Sector and explore avenues for optimum exploitation of ocean resources under the ambit of Blue Economy. I am sure that the event will provide excellent opportunity for enhanced networking and knowledge sharing through International Maritime Conference also focusing on Blue Economy.

In view of Pakistan's overwhelming reliance on sea based trade, maritime industry is a guarantor of Pakistan's sustainable growth and prosperity. PIMEC intends to provide a foundation to bring together international and national stakeholders from diverse maritime

industries to synergise businesses and forge economic cooperation.

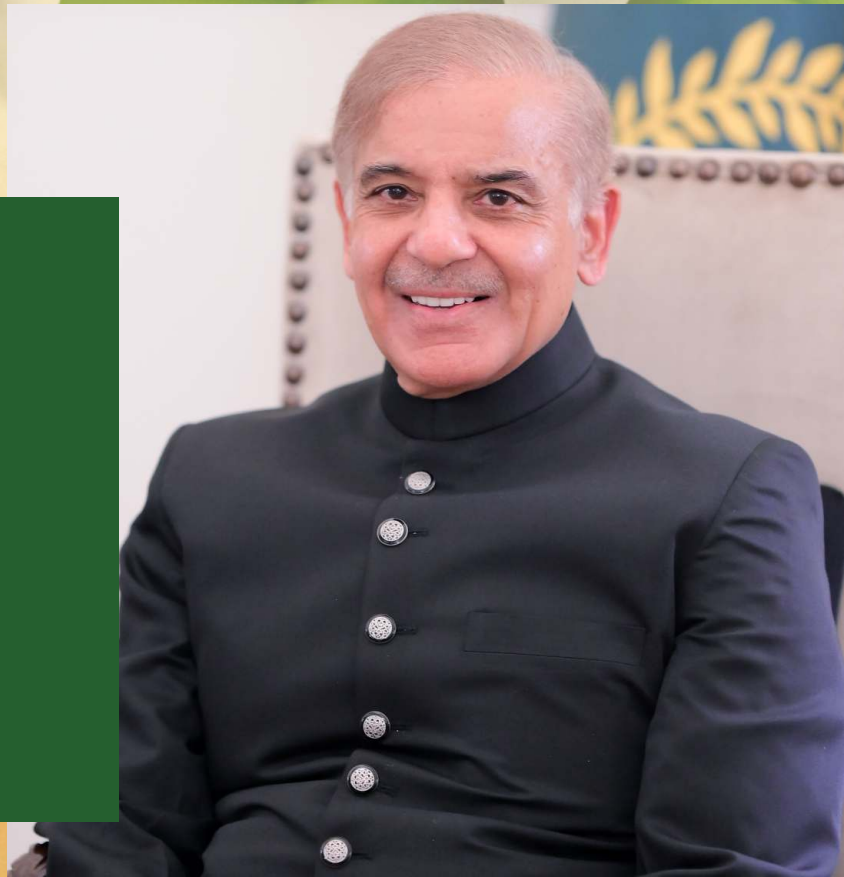
Despite challenges, Pakistan would continue to endeavour for enhanced cooperation and collaboration with the international community for sustainable growth in the maritime sector. I am confident that PIMEC will contribute significantly towards fostering and promoting strategic partnership with friendly countries and advance our shared objective of economic prosperity.

I would like to commend the efforts of Ministry of Maritime Affairs & Pakistan Navy for conduct of this path-breaking event. I pray for the success of PIMEC and hope it provides the much needed stimulus for the maritime economic growth of our beloved country.

---

**H.E. Dr. Arif Alvi**

## Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan



I am pleased to learn that the Pakistan Navy is conducting the premiere edition of Pakistan International Maritime Expo & Conference (PIMEC) 2023. This Exhibition will showcase the rich potential of Pakistan's maritime sector with an aim to draw attention towards maritime industry's contribution towards the Blue Ocean economy as well as in raising maritime awareness among the people.

Over the years PIMEC has emerged as a platform for interaction of ideas amongst the professionals and experts belonging to the maritime industry. It is a manifestation of Pakistan's maritime capabilities in diverse fields with a focus on marine related commercial enterprises. This would provide an exceptionally interactive platform to demonstrate maritime products, thus opening new opportunities for contracting, outsourcing, joint venturing and signing of MoUs for technical collaboration in the maritime field with the national and international partners.

The platform would not only benefit mutual relationships and interests but also help bring the international community together in the

pursuit of shared prosperity. In fact, it would be a unique opportunity for the participating countries and their companies to be part of this strategic business platform of PIMEC.

It goes without saying that the role of the port cities, such as Karachi and Gwadar, is pivotal to Pakistan's economic progress. Not only will the development of ports give a fillip to the economic activities in the country, but would also be central to fruition of the upcoming projects and developments in the maritime industry. The government fully supports the Ministry of Maritime Affairs' determination to introduce modern techniques in the way port handling and shipping are done in Pakistan.

On this occasion, I would like to convey my deep appreciation to all the stakeholders, especially Pakistan Navy for taking this wonderful initiative under the auspices of the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, and for channelising efforts to showcase Pakistan's maritime potential in a business friendly and professional manner.

---

**H.E. Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif**

## Minister of the Maritime Affairs



The Blue Economy is regarded as the sustainable use of ocean or 'Blue Resources' for socio-economic development, improved livelihoods and creating jobs while preserving the health of marine ecosystem. Pakistan is strategically located in the Indian Ocean at the crossroads of major commercial trade routes. Given the geographical and territorial advantage, its potential in Blue Economy is immense which can be accrued with a focused maritime approach, strategic planning and determined implementation.

The Indian Ocean has huge reservoirs of living and non-living resources which include petroleum, natural gas and diverse marine life. In terms of fishery resources; fish and shrimps are the basic livelihood of majority of coastal population of Sindh and Baluchistan region. Providing opportunities for maritime businesses will help raise the standard of living amongst coastal communities and at the same time, inculcate in them realization of the importance of maritime education.

The Pakistan International Maritime Expo &

Conference (PIMEC-2023), scheduled in February this year, will be a hall mark event which will offer a platform for maritime players from home and abroad to showcase their maritime expertise and range of products for mutually beneficial partnerships. This will also complement MoMA's drive to improve and enact local legislations, remove maritime industrial bottlenecks and evolve ways & means to accrue maximum benefit from Pakistan's richly blessed maritime sector.

I would like to convey my appreciation for all the stakeholders, who are committed to make PIMEC-23, a befitting success. I would especially like to acknowledge Pakistan Navy's initiative and hard work in transforming this concept into a reality. I am confident that regular conduct of PIMEC in up-coming years will play a major role in promoting the maritime sector in a sustainable way and exploitation of its true maritime potential.

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**Syed Faisal Ali Subzwari**

## Chief of the Naval Staff



Pakistan has enormous maritime potential and its economic prosperity is inextricably linked to the development of its maritime sector. However, this realization in our national reckoning has only started dawning in recent years. Pakistan Navy, being a major stakeholder in shaping maritime thought in the country, is alive to this need and is proactively playing its role in creating the requisite maritime awareness for exploitation of the untapped potential of our Blue Economy.

It is in this context, that Pakistan Navy is hosting its first ever 'Pakistan International Maritime Expo & Conference (PIMEC)' under the patronage of Ministry of Maritime Affairs, from 10-12 February 2023 at Expo Centre, Karachi. It will be a milestone event to bring together international and national stakeholders, creating a marketplace for presenting innovative ideas and showcasing our maritime potential and opportunities in this vast and dynamic field.

PIMEC-23 is being organized to highlight the opportunities available in multiple maritime domains including; Shipping, Port Infrastructure, Coastal Tourism, Fisheries and Hydrocarbon Resources. It offers an interactive platform, opening new vistas for

Pakistan's industry in contracting, outsourcing, joint venturing and demonstrating their products and signing MoUs for technical collaboration in the maritime sector.

A Maritime Conference is also being organized which will provide a platform for discussion on contemporary maritime issues. It is expected that the Conference will see lively discussion and yield tangible takeaways towards the larger purpose of maritime progress.

I am confident that the event will go a long way in accruing the desired benefits from our rich, attractive and diverse maritime potential. Through PIMEC, let us also re-affirm our commitment and resolve towards preserving the sustainable use of oceans and marine resources, exploiting nature's ultimate source of life, to fuel economies, spur growth and benefit the mankind for our collective good and shared prosperity.

I am sure the event will go a long way in promoting Blue Economy and providing the much needed fillip to our maritime economic growth.

**Chief of the Naval Staff**  
**Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi NI(M) S Bt**



## Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye

H.E. Dr. Mehmet Paçacı



The achievements of brotherly Pakistan have always been a source of proud for Türkiye. We believe that maritime sector in Pakistan has an immense potential to become one of the achievements with the efforts to promote cooperation in this field. With this in mind, Turkish companies will take part in Pakistan International Maritime Expo and Conference (PIMEC-2023) to be held in Karachi on 10-12 February 2023, to further contribute to the existing cooperation in maritime sector with brotherly Pakistan.

It is also a great honor to announce that Turkish Naval Forces will participate in Pakistan Navy's Multinational Exercise AMAN-2023 on 10-14 February 2023 in Karachi to become "Together for Peace". Pakistan Navy well deserves most sincere congratulations for this biannual exercise since 2007 by hosting foreign navies to highlight its commitment to make territorial seas safe and secure and to maintain the peace and security in the region. The drills will help sea forces explore new horizons of naval cooperation and maritime security.

We are glad to have this opportunity to show our commitment to stand in solidarity with the friendly and brotherly nations in fight against maritime threats, to maintain the peace and security.

## Ambassador of Romania

In our opinion, over the years AMAN and PIMEC have become traditional engagements also between the naval forces around the globe but not limited to the military sector, thus involving multiple categories of stakeholders that have their efforts, businesses and dependencies connected to the necessity for secure, healthy and well preserved territorial sea and international waters. The cooperation on this complex topic is aiming towards supporting the common ideals, from maintaining the sea lines communication undisturbed and ensuring the security and stability of the routes, to the aim for fighting piracy and terrorism. It was proven in the past that disrupting those efforts can generate a big effect, not only at regional level, but in the global context, especially on the economical sector which is directly connected to the welfare of the people.

Romania has been taking part actively in those efforts, given the complex situation in Ukraine, generated by the brutal, unprovoked and unjustified aggression of the Russian Federation. The contribution of Romania for establishing

H.E. Mr. Nicolae GOIA

alternative routes, especially in the food sector, has diminished the negative effects that the Russian aggression had on multiple countries around the globe.

We are all preoccupied on pushing our maritime sector towards achieving a global, healthy blue economy which became demanding in the last years as we are looking more at our oceans and seas as the next great economic frontier as they hold potential for innovation, employment and economic growth.

Romania is a strong supporter of peace and stability, that is why we cherish longstanding initiatives that promote the common goals through exchanging values and expertise that have the potential to keep pushing the world ahead in the right direction.



## Embassy of Peoples Republic of China

I would like to express my warm congratulations to Pakistan for holding the Exercise Aman-23 and Pakistan International Maritime Expo & Conference (PIMEC). The theme of Aman-23 is Together for Peace, which demonstrates the determination of all participating parties and partners to unity and maintain peace. It is believed that through a series of activities, all parties including the Chinese and Pakistani navies, will further enhance the level of cooperation, improve the ability to jointly respond to risks and challenges, tap the development potential of blue economy, and contribute new strengths to maintaining regional peace and stability. The Chinese side sincerely congratulates Economic Affairs on the release of its special edition, and appreciates its positive contribution to strengthening international maritime cooperation.

China and Pakistan are good friends, good partners and good brothers. Under the strategic guidance of the leaders of the two countries, China and Pakistan have always supported each other and forged ahead, demonstrating the iron-clad friendship between the two countries. The high-level interactions between the two countries have maintained closely, and the political mutual trust has been continuously enhanced. Last year, President Xi Jinping met with the Prime Ministers of Pakistan three times. Prime Minister Shehbaz paid a successful visit to China in November, becoming the first head of government to visit China after the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China. Not long ago, Premier Li Keqiang spoke with Prime Minister Shehbaz over the phone, and the new Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang had a telephone call with Foreign Minister Bilawal immediately after taking office.

With the strong guidance of the leaders, China and Pakistan are making great strides towards building a closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future in the new era. The construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has been constantly enriched and expanded. The two militaries have achieved fruitful results in fields such as high-level visits, joint training and exercises, anti-pandemic cooperation, and equipment and technology cooperation. China is willing to work with Pakistan to maintain regional peace and stability, tap the potential of blue economic cooperation, use of marine resources such as fisheries, renewable energy, tourism, and shipping in a sustainable way, and jointly respond to non-traditional security issues including global pandemics, climate change and ocean governance, injecting certainty and positives into the world.

The year 2023 marks the beginning of full implementation of the guiding principles laid down at the 20th National Congress of CPC. China is willing to work with Pakistan to implement the important consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries, solidly enhance all-round exchanges and cooperation, promote the implementation of Global Development Initiatives and Global Security Initiatives, build a community with a shared future for mankind, provide a strong support for the development of the two countries, and make more contributions to the peace, stability and common prosperity of the world.

**Ms. Pang Chunxue,**  
Charge d' Affairs, Chinese Embassy in Pakistan

# The custodian of the waterfronts

Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi NI(M) S Bt says that the force is agile in ensuring the resolute defence of the country besides ensuring maritime security and peace in the Indian Ocean.

Interview by: S.A. Chaudhry

Chief of the Naval Staff  
Admiral Muhammad  
Amjad Khan Niazi NI(M) S Bt

The Economic Affairs was privileged for a one-on-one interview with the Pakistan Navy's Chief who shed light on its strengths, agility, and resoluteness to defend the sea frontiers and protect the maritime interests of the country. With Pakistan's geostrategic location in the Indian Ocean, at the doorstep of the Arabian Gulf, the Pakistan Navy has been playing an important role in promoting regional maritime security and good order at sea.

With the changing geostrategic realities in the region, he said that the role and responsibilities of the Pakistan Navy are growing exponentially, which is steadily undertaking capability enhancement and capacity development to optimally deal with added responsibilities and evolving challenges.

Cognizant of its geostrategic location astride important energy Sea Lines of Communications (SLOCs) and its international obligations, He says that Pakistan has been playing an active role in ensuring maritime security and peace in the Indian Ocean.



PN has been participating in all regional/ international efforts and initiatives taken for maintaining good order at sea. PN's commitment to the common goal of ensuring freedom of navigation and uninterrupted flow of sea trade is unquestionable.

**Here are the excerpts from the interview;**

**Sir! Kindly share the vision of the Pakistan Navy behind conducting the AMAN series of Exercises and PIMEC-23.**

Pakistan is a peace-loving country and has always promoted peace efforts in the region and beyond. Prevailing non-traditional threats in the maritime domain such as terrorism, piracy, drug smuggling, and arms trafficking require a collaborative approach as no single country can single-handedly counter these

challenges.

The same spirit of collaboration is the vision behind the Pakistan Navy's initiative of hosting the Multinational Maritime Exercise AMAN. This Exercise with its motto, 'Together for Peace' is conducted to develop synergy between participating navies to tackle these common and wide-ranging maritime security challenges.

The vision behind the first-ever International Maritime Expo &

Conference (PIMEC) being held in Pakistan from 10-12 February 2023 is to create a marketplace for presenting innovative ideas and showcasing our huge maritime potential in this rather untapped sector. It will afford participants and stakeholders, both international and national, the first-hand opportunity for scoping, networking, and a hand-shake for B2G and B2B interactions to explore and exploit our blue economic potential.



A Maritime Conference will also be conducted during PIMEC in which eminent speakers, experts, and representatives from home and abroad, both from public and private sectors, will share their views on contemporary maritime issues and suggest viable options for developing countries, like Pakistan, to spur our Blue Economy.

I believe the conduct of these mega events simultaneously would give a significant boost to our shared objective of collaborative maritime security and provide an impetus to the development of Pakistan's maritime sector for the mutual benefit of all the participants.

**What is the significance and relevance of Exercise AMAN and PIMEC for Pakistan and other countries in the region/ international partners? How they will help in portraying a positive image of Pakistan, and attract investment in Blue Economy?**

Exercise AMAN is a humble effort for enhancing cooperation between navies against prevalent and emerging transnational security threats. The steadily growing participation in Ex AMAN reinforces our belief that many navies in our region and beyond share our vision to

foster regional cooperation for the maintenance of good order at sea, improve interoperability, share experiences, and exhibit collective resolve against maritime terrorism, piracy, and other organized crimes. Ex AMAN has now become one of the major multinational events in our region and it is the Pakistan Navy's endeavour to continue to forge cooperation and enhance the participation of international navies in Exercise AMAN to make it more inclusive and effective.

The 7th series of Exercise AMAN was conducted in February 2021, which despite Covid pandemic attracted the participation of over 40 navies. This reflected a mutual desire to shake off Covid concerns and come together for the cause of promoting peace and stability at sea. 8th series of Ex AMAN is scheduled at Karachi from 10-14 February 2023 and healthy participation of navies is expected from across the globe.

The conduct of PIMEC alongside Ex AMAN-23 is a conscious effort to promote the development of Pakistan's maritime sector. This will focus attention on the maritime domain within our national policy framework as well as

generate avenues of cooperation among delegates from different countries. In the prevailing economic situation, PIMEC can play an important role in tapping alternate avenues for rejuvenating Pakistan's economic growth.

**What other initiatives are being taken by Pakistan Navy with the neighbouring countries and major naval forces in the context of defence diplomacy?**

Pakistan Navy is a vital and integral component of national defence diplomacy. In addition to Exercise AMAN, Pakistan Navy contributes to our foreign policy objectives through Flag Showing, Key Leadership Engagements, Navy to Navy Expert Level Staff Talks (ELSTs), Overseas Deployments (OSDs), participation in bilateral/ multilateral maritime Exercises, Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Relief (HADR) missions and undertaking Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations of stranded people from conflict zones. Recently, during FIFA-2022 World Cup in Qatar, Pakistan Navy Ship and Pak Marines were deployed on maritime security duties for this mega event. These opportunities besides enhancing interoperability with

regional as well as international navies; create goodwill, leverage influence, and helps us build lasting partnerships.

Pakistan Navy has established a Navy to Navy Expert Level Staff Talks (ELSTs) mechanism with 21 Navies across the globe to pursue bilateral collaboration in a structured manner covering operational, training, and technical cooperation aspects. PN Ships also regularly undertake port calls from Far East Asia to Africa, Arabian Gulf, and Europe. Furthermore, in line with Pakistan's 'Engage Africa' Policy, PN Ships have undertaken HADR operations for the provisioning of food aid to Djibouti, Sudan, and Niger, as well as established medical camps in African Countries in 2019 and 2022. Moreover, at multilateral foras, Pakistan Navy is a member of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium and an Observer in the Western Pacific Naval Symposium. PN also participates in International Sea Power Symposium (ISS), USA and Trans-Regional Sea Power Symposium (TRSS), Italy.

**What are your views about the participation of the Pakistan Navy in Multilateral Coalition Maritime Forces (CMF) and Pakistan Navy's separate initiative of Regional Maritime Security Patrol (RMSP), what are RMSP objectives?**

PN participation in Combined Task Force 150 since 2004 and Combined Task Force 151 since 2009 under the ambit of Combined Maritime Forces

(CMF) are well known and have been recognized at the international level. In the last two decades, PN has commanded CTF-150 for 12 times and CTF-151 for 10 times making PN one of the largest contributors to CMF operations and entrusted regularly with command responsibilities. Deployment of PN Ships and Aircraft has led to the seizure of more than 20,000 kgs of narcotics, over 40,000 bottles of liquor, and a significant reduction in piracy threats around the Horn of Africa. In addition, PN Ships have also rescued and assisted stranded fishermen and ships of the maritime community, irrespective of their nationalities.

In 2018, PN instituted the 'Regional Maritime Security Patrol' (RMSP) to contribute towards maritime security and protect its own national interests in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) with strategic autonomy. RMSP focuses on establishing maritime patrols along vital choke points and important maritime areas in the IOR to maintain good order at sea and to deter/ curb non-traditional security threats. RMSP also helps to foster partnerships with regional countries and enhances interoperability while conducting Port Visits and

Passage Exercises. In a nutshell, PN has made significant contributions towards maritime security through CMF as well as RMSP deployments, making us a proactive and vibrant partner of regional maritime security construct.

**How do you view the regional maritime environment and security dynamics in the wake of re-alignments of the countries/ building of new blocks due to the emergence of new power centres? What are the key challenges faced by Pakistan Navy in the domestic and regional maritime sphere?**

The global security environment is dynamic, turbulent, and in an



unprecedented transition; shaped by global realignments, competing interests, and pursuit of technological ascendancy. In our immediate the neighbourhood, the situation in Afghanistan remains uncertain post-US withdrawal which has a direct bearing on Pakistan's internal security.

Given the limited capacity of the Afghan Govt to curtail

narco-trafficking from Afghanistan, drugs find their way over land and through sea routes to various international destinations which is also a source of funding for miscreants and terrorist elements. To our east, unilateral and provocative actions by India including the nuclearization of the Indian Ocean through the induction of nuclear submarines are impacting strategic balance and regional maritime security. US-Iran simmering relations and the Yemen conflict continue to pose risks to shipping plying along the international Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs).

In addition to asymmetric threats, natural disasters, climate change, and the recent pandemic have further complicated the security calculus. In short, we continue to face an ominous hybrid mix of traditional and non-traditional challenges. This has necessitated the maintenance of requisite Maritime Domain Awareness for the safety of shipping plying through our maritime zones and maintaining the optimum level of preparedness to respond swiftly.

**What is the significance of the maritime security environment of Pakistan, keeping in view the hostile neighbouring country on the one hand and on the other hand the emerging maritime economic opportunities arising from Gwadar Port?**

As already highlighted, our neighbour to the east is a major security concern for us. India is committing gross



human rights violations in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir and remains intransigent towards the resolution of longstanding disputes. The Revocation of Article 370 by India and the creation of Union Territories is a unilateral attempt to change the legal and constitutional status of Jammu and Kashmir, which is a disputed territory as per UN Resolutions, and an act that poses a serious threat to peace and security in the region.

Widening conventional asymmetry in the maritime domain, hegemonic mindset and aggressive Indian policies have complicated our threat calculus. PN has embarked on progressive capability enhancement of the fleet as per our maritime security dictates to offset the adverse effects of Indian military expansion.

A pragmatic solution to our economic challenges is to diversify the economy and explore new avenues for

sustainable economic development. In this context, Gwadar Port provides immense opportunities due to its proximity to the energy-rich Arabian Gulf. It is pertinent to mention that around 21 million barrels of crude oil pass through the Strait of Hormuz each day with annual traffic of 23,000 ships that transit close to our coast.

Pakistan also offers the shortest access to the sea for Central Asian Republics, Afghanistan, and western parts of China through Karachi and Gwadar Ports. The full functioning of these ports, particularly the one at Gwadar along with its linkages with regional countries will help accelerate the economic progress of Pakistan and the region. Pakistan Navy is committed to ensuring maritime security in Pakistan's maritime zones including Gwadar Port to accrue benefits from resources endowed by Almighty Allah in our abundantly rich maritime zones.



**What are the major strands of innovative initiatives for the transformation of the Pakistan Navy to make it more competitive with other naval forces participating in AMAN Exercise? Will this enable Pakistan Navy to thwart the challenges posed by a hostile the neighbouring country?**

Pakistan Navy has embarked on progressive capability development to transform PN Fleet into a modern multi-dimensional force without indulging in an arms race. Our development strategy hinges on the induction of cost-effective platforms, force multipliers, indigenization, and diversification of options to mitigate external dependencies.

This said Pakistan Navy does not in any way engage in competition with participating naval forces in Exercise AMAN as the purpose of the Exercise is to adopt a unified approach to tackle common maritime challenges. I must emphasize here that Exercise AMAN has no political connotation and is endeavour to forge cooperation between participating navies to deliver

a timely and synergetic response to common non-traditional security threats and challenges.

As far as the hostile neighbour is concerned, Pakistan Navy is well configured to safeguard its maritime frontiers and secure its maritime interests.

Modernization through new inductions and doctrinal refinements will further consolidate our credible conventional deterrence. Pakistan Navy will continue to play its role in promoting regional peace and stability, albeit without blinking an eye, to safeguard our sovereignty and territorial integrity.

**What measures Pakistan Navy has undertaken to enhance vigilance and to combat illicit activities like terrorism, drug trafficking, illegal fishing, etc. in Pakistan's maritime**

**boundaries and its impact on Blue Economy?**

Today, our dependence on oceans has increased exponentially and Pakistan Navy is the principal instrument to secure our maritime interests. Within our maritime zones and beyond, Pakistan Navy continues to ensure maritime security and provides a conducive environment for unhindered maritime economic activities. In this regard, the navy conducts Intelligence Based Operations (IBOs) in coordination with Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) and other law enforcement agencies to deny



and disrupt illicit activities and the flow of financial resources to undesirable elements and terrorist outfits.

Pakistan Navy also coordinates with national and international organizations through Joint Maritime Information and Coordination Centre (JMICC) to respond to maritime security and safety incidents at sea as well as in ports and harbours. In addition, coastal areas particularly Gwadar Port and its approaches are regularly monitored to deter unlawful activities through the effective functioning of



Coastal Security & Harbour Defence Force (CS&HDF) and Task Force-88, raised specifically to provide seaward security to CPEC, Gwadar Port and its approaches.

**How would you describe Pakistan Navy's core role and responsibilities in national defence and keeping peace/security in the region?**

In the realm of national defence, ensuring the seaward defence of Pakistan and protection of our vital sea routes and maritime interests of Pakistan are the core tasks of the Pakistan Navy. The security challenges to Pakistan include both Traditional and Non-Traditional Security Threats. Pakistan Navy maintains the highest state of combat readiness to deal with the entire spectrum of threats ranging from non-traditional and sub-conventional



maintain a safe and secure environment through cooperative and collective security initiatives.

**What are the strategic importance and economic potential of the shipbuilding industry of Pakistan and how it will make Pakistan Navy self-reliant in shipbuilding?**

The global shipbuilding and repair services industry has

destination for shipbuilding and ship repair work due to its strategic location at the confluence of energy SLOCs as well as the easy availability of HR and cheap labour.

Pakistan Navy has been playing an effective role to enhance the ship construction capabilities of Karachi Shipyard and Engineering Works (KS&EW) and several PN ships including Frigates, Fleet Tanker, and Missile Craft have been constructed at KS&EW. Currently, MILGEM Class Corvettes, HANGOR Class Submarines, and Gun Boats are being constructed at KS&EW. I may also highlight that the construction of the Shipyard at Gwadar will give a substantial boost to our indigenous ship repair and shipbuilding capabilities.

Pakistan Navy is also making concerted efforts to generate awareness and project Pakistan's potential in the shipbuilding and ship repair industry, most notably through the upcoming PIMEC at Karachi. High-level interactions are expected during PIMEC to boost investment and partnerships in the maritime sector.



challenges, to high-end conventional conflict.

In addition, PN contributes towards peace and security in the region through participation in regional/international efforts to

enormous potential. We have witnessed East Asian countries including China, Japan and South Korea where these industries are supporting their national economies substantially. In this regard, Pakistan also offers an ideal

# Foster maritime security collaboration

**His Excellency Nawaf Bin Said Al-Malki  
Ambassador of  
Saudi Arabia to Pakistan**

His Excellency Nawaf Bin Said Al-Malki, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan, talks about the multi-lateral AMAN Exercise in the sea waters, and the unfathomable brotherly relations between the two brotherly nations in an exclusive interview with the Economic Affairs. Here are the excerpts;

Interview by: Kashif Rizwan

**Excellency! How do you see conducting of Multilateral AMAN Exercise and PIMEC by Pakistan over the years? What is the significance of participating in these events for Saudi Arabia?**

The multilateral "AMAN Exercise" and the Pakistan International Maritime Exhibition and Conference, in which the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia continuously participates, and in which the Arab and Islamic countries participate, in addition to the United States, Britain, France, and China, aim to develop security cooperation to promote a sustainable maritime environment, and strengthen Saudi-Pakistani defense relations.

**Your excellency! as you know the growing importance of the Blue Economy globally, do you see avenues of expanding regional cooperation in Blue Economy?**

The blue economy is the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth and improved livelihoods and jobs while maintaining the health of the ocean's natural system. It is very necessary for the livelihoods of peoples and countries, and I think it is very important internationally that we continue to focus on the blue economy so that we can build partnerships between civil society and the private sector.

**Royal Saudi Naval Forces (RSNF) and Pakistan Navy have historical brotherly relations and lasting**

**cooperation. How AMAN Exercise could be helpful to address the common strategic maritime concerns to ensure peace and security in the Gulf Region?**

The Saudi Royal Navy and the Pakistani Navy enjoy friendly relations and a close professional relationship and they have many joint naval Exercises and Exercises, and there is no doubt that the "AMAN Exercise" is very useful for strategic naval concerns. It ensures peace and security in the Gulf region, because Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are committed to the international resolve to maintain stability and curb terrorism in all its forms.

**Is the AMAN Exercise an initiative of defense diplomacy, which can help boost not only Pakistan but also the other participating Muslim countries' image?**

Yes, "AMAN Exercise" is an initiative of defensive diplomacy, and it enhances the image of Pakistan and all Islamic countries participating in this Exercise, because one of the tasks of defensive diplomacy is preventing armed conflicts and reforming security sectors. It also accommodates defense activities of a friendly nature, such as the exchange of visits of delegations and military personnel at the state level,

and visits to ships, naval vessels, and warplanes of various types and missions. As well as high-level specialized diplomatic representation (defense ministers, chiefs of staff, and senior defense officials). In addition to



committees for meetings on bilateral military cooperation and integration, Exercises, and regional defense forums, as well as measures taken to establish awareness and enhance confidence and security.

**How the AMAN Exercise could help combat maritime terrorism, piracy, drug trafficking, and human smuggling, which are major common challenges for the regional countries?**

"AMAN Exercise" helps to combat maritime terrorism, piracy, drug trafficking, human trafficking, and other crimes. The Exercise aims to develop and improve response tactics, also to developing and improving counter-terrorism techniques at sea, because the increase in the intensity of activities at sea takes place against the backdrop of insecurity and various forms of illegal trade.

# Maritime linkages

*An inter-connected Asia has the potential to grow faster than other regions through a sustainable supply chain and an interlinked maritime sector that can increase its capacity to connect with global networks with greater efficiency to spur growth and prosperity in the region.*

## Dr Hassan Daud Butt

As the world moves more towards regional constructs, the Indian Ocean region is fast becoming the centre of gravity in global trade. The challenges facing us, are more wide-reaching than ever from political to economic to healthcare, with growth forecasts fluctuating fast. Even with the deteriorating outlook, inter-

connected Asia has the potential to grow faster than other regions through a sustainable supply chain and an interlinked maritime sector that can increase its capacity to connect with global networks with greater efficiency to spur growth and prosperity in the region.



Similarly, a regional integration met through the maritime sector apart from its impact on growth and development through greater integration and increasing mutual dependence, could reduce the likelihood of regional conflict. The COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the global economy demonstrated the importance of a robust Blue Economy which has the potential to address the headwinds in an environmentally sustainable way. Yet, understanding and implementation of particular visions of the blue economy in specific regions deviate according to a national context.

According to ADB's Asian Development Outlook (ADO) 2022, Pakistan's situation for FY2023 has deteriorated under heavy flooding with higher domestic energy prices and flood-related crop and livestock losses, and supply disruption. Supply chain difficulties have exacerbated these shortages. Therefore, an out of box economic solution is required to address these headwinds and one opportunity that exists is exploring the opportunities that our coastline offers. Similarly, according to the report of the Maritime Study Forum(MSR), Fisheries provide employment to about 500,000 fishermen directly, whereas, more than 1 million people are employed in ancillary industries.

The rejuvenation of the Blue Economy in Pakistan matters for two main reasons. Firstly, a

**There is a need to be proactive to catch up with other nations in this disruptive era leveraging through a pragmatic maritime policy articulation that addresses the aspect of increasing investment in maritime sector-related industrialization for radical economic transformation.**

Blue Economy links environmental sustainability with economic development that can fast affect millions of people living in rural less developed parts of Pakistan. Secondly, Pakistan being part of China's Belt and Road initiative (BRI) can easily attract Chinese investment in shipping,

coastal tourism and shipbreaking ports, and ocean economy-related infrastructure and facilitate new sources of economic growth as part of China's Maritime Silk Road policy that aims to rejuvenate China's trading relationship with other states as an opportunity for states to cooperate with China for joint shared prosperity, growth, and security.

The development of the Gwadar port and the inclusion of the Ketī Bandar Port in the CPEC projects has opened new vistas of growth for industry and trade and through the Maritime Silk Route, the maritime sector in Pakistan should be given the required attention and thus it is imperative that Pakistan realizes its maritime potential and works to earn prominence among the participating states of the MSR.

There is a need to be proactive to catch up with other nations in this disruptive era leveraging through a pragmatic maritime policy articulation that addresses the aspect of increasing investment in maritime sector-related industrialization for radical economic transformation. All of us need to be captains or advocates of this sector.

An easy solution could be setting up a maritime sector-led Special economic zone along the coastline where all related industries including the industry related to maritime tourism can be shifted and the investors can benefit from the Government policies under SEZ. This may not be a seamless process as stakeholders attached to the maritime sector will have to adopt new ideas and technologies under an improved framework as creating new resources and opportunities are vital to meet soaring demand.

Today in a post-COVID era, a new generation of tech-driven solutions are being explored to reinvigorate the high-tech maritime sector making it more resilient to shocks. We need to discuss the maritime sector more in our business chambers, research institutions, HEIs, and trading associations as it is imperative that we draw the vital attention of our businessmen and industrialists toward our magnificent coastal regions and inevitably toward the sea, and blue economy.

Events like PIMEC are therefore important as they provide opportunities to the local maritime industry to display products at one platform for joint ventures, transfer of technology, and research with international partners while highlighting Pakistan's vast potential for the Blue Economy. This sector boasts tremendous economic potential, sources of oil and gas, and an abundance of seafood.

In 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, the total aquatic product trade between China and ASEAN alone posted \$3.649 billion, of which China imported \$1.553 billion worth of aquatic products and if we build our capacity through tailor-made fishery management, the Chinese demand for marine products can be guided towards us provided the government facilitates and creates ease of doing business through a robust multilateral framework as our maritime sector has a significant component of national economy and security.

We also need to explore an innovative way of reorganizing our state-owned shipping company by understanding the role of joint ventures and strategic partnerships available in the second phase of China Pak Economic Corridor (CPEC). Although the year 2020 was declared as the year of the Blue Economy in Pakistan, the attention and resources it deserves could not be allocated.

Broadly speaking, to end sea blindness, we need to review some of the rules of the game, which have managed the maritime sector in the last few decades, to create a conducive environment away from conventional ideas about management, operations, leadership, and innovation, making it an important source of income and employment and perhaps improving it to at least 10 percent contributor to the GDP by 2050 and a major contributor towards tourism-related revenue. The pandemic has also strengthened the case for digitalization and eliminating paperwork in the shipping industry, reinforcing the need for standards and interoperability in electronic documentation. Many trade facilitation measures taken during



the pandemic require further investments in digitalization and automation with an increased focus on cyber security risks. To further gain on the potential, Gwadar port may be linked with Chabahar and Salalah Port and other regional ports and the development work as per the port master plan may be executed on priority.

While we explore solutions to improve our economy, let's use our abilities to see how extreme poverty is addressed under the agenda of SDGs to encourage fast connectivity by incentivizing the maritime industry, which can generate employment and enhance exports. To achieve all this, it is expected that leadership amongst key stakeholders as well as at the national level will take pragmatic, bold, efficient, and flexible decisions to improve and benefit from what already exists.

Lastly, our vocational and training centres must be able to provide a steady stream of HR into the Maritime industry which is efficient and skilled to shoulder the task of transforming Pakistan into the future maritime and trans-shipment hub of the region for which the role of the private sector is becoming critical as the government alone cannot undertake this vital task. The task is difficult, yet the dividend is enormous leaving no room for complacency.



*The writer is a Projects Management Specialist, and faculty member of the projects management departments at various institutes/universities.*

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# A constructive soft power initiative

**Prof. Dr. Zafar Nawaz Jaspal**

The states require a systemic balance between both soft power and hard power capabilities to pursue their national interests in contemporary geopolitics. The soft power resources at the disposal of government machinery are a critical part of the foreign policy tools needed to maximize the state's interests in the anarchical international society. The states skillful in using soft power to facilitate positive collaboration are

in an advantageous position in the current globalized interdependent world. This leads to two interlinked questions: how can soft power be deployed effectively? Second, is AMAN Exercise 2023 a soft power real tool? A basic understanding of soft power and a precise explanation of the AMAN Exercise 2023 seems imperative for answering these questions.

*As one of the top troop-contributing countries, Pakistan deeply values the vital role played by “blue helmets” in maintaining security and stability in many conflict-ridden areas around the world.*





Soft power—"the ability of a country to persuade others to do what it wants without force or coercion"—describes the use of positive attraction and persuasion to achieve foreign policy objectives. Joseph Nye in the late 1980s coined the term soft power and identified three primary sources of the concept of soft power i.e. political culture, science, and foreign policy.

However, within these three categories, the individual sources of soft power are manifold and varied. For instance, 'attractiveness of a country's economic model, business friendliness, capacity for scientific innovation, human resource proficiency, contribution to scholarship entailing academic exchanges, commitment to freedom, human rights, and democracy,' etc. Presently, soft power is viewed as the best tool to attract foreign direct investment, tourism, and merchandise.



Pakistan deeply values the vital role played by "blue helmets" in maintaining security and stability in many conflict-ridden areas around the world." For example, over 200,000 Pakistani service men and women had served with honor and valor in 46 UN Missions in almost all continents of the world since 1960. Pakistan Navy participated in the United Nations-mandated Combined Maritime Task Forces 150 & 151 in regional and extra-regional joint bilateral and multilateral Exercises intended for 'peaceful coexistence' and desire for greater regional harmony and cooperation.

**Since 2007, Pakistan has been hosting the biannual multinational AMAN (peace) Exercise for collective maritime security. The Exercise is not a war game but drills against nontraditional security threats.**

Since 2007, Pakistan has been hosting the biannual multinational AMAN (peace) Exercise for collective maritime security. The Exercise is not a war game but drills against nontraditional security threats. Despite having competing strategic objectives, through Aman 2021, the many international navies learn from one another to defeat piracy, maritime terrorism, drugs and arms trafficking, human smuggling, and other threats in the maritime domain. The growing number of participating countries made AMAN a major multinational Exercise for exhibiting a common resolve against crimes and illicit activities in the maritime domain. Besides, it reflects growing trust in the Pakistan Navy's "credibility in bringing navies of the East and West under a common platform, for good of the global commons."

Pakistan can improve its economic prosperity by projecting its soft power, with the help of its cultural heritage, companies and workforce professionalism, foundations, universities, sports, and other institutions of civil society. Notably, the government machinery/institutions have a cardinal responsibility in fostering and enunciating the soft power image of the nation. In this context, the armed forces of Pakistan have been performing their responsibility proficiently through humanitarian intervention and being part of the United Nations peacekeeping corps—blue helmets.

As one of the top troop-contributing countries,

The AMAN Exercises demonstrate Pakistan's commitment to peace, contribute towards regional maritime security and enhance cooperation and interoperability between



regional and extra-regional navies to display a united resolve against terrorism and crimes in the maritime domain including piracy.

According to Admiral M Amjad Khan Niazi, Chief of the Naval Staff of the Pakistan Navy, "Taking the lead, the Pakistan Navy took an initiative of holding biennial Multinational Exercise Aman in 2007, to demonstrate Pakistan's commitment to peace, reinforce regional maritime security and enhance interoperability between regional and extra-regional navies." Indeed, mutual trust, enhancing cooperation, pooling resources, and establishing standard practices are prerequisites to tackling the nontraditional threats, mainly combating the non-state actors' destabilizing activities at the sea.

Indeed, a stable maritime order could only be established through integration rather than alienation. Therefore, along with the like-minded littoral nations, Pakistan Navy had been struggling to ensure India Ocean Region's shipping routes, which are exposed to the non-state actors' hazardous activities that pose risks to ships plying along the Sea Lines of Communications.

The seafaring nations, including Pakistan, cannot afford any disruption in traffic flow through these SLOCs and choke points. Pakistan's 90%

of trade is in Seaborne, and most of its energy requirements are also met through the Sea. Therefore, Pakistan Navy launched the initiative of Regional Maritime Security Patrol to make seas safer for human use, augment maritime security and contribute to freedom of navigation in the Region in 2018. Moreover, it has been sending its flotilla to the Gulf of Aden for maritime security in the region since 2009.

Pakistan Navy is planning to hold its 8th AMAN multinational Naval Exercise in the North Arabian Sea from February 10 to 12, 2023. It extended invitations to 110 states to participate in the said Exercise. The Aman

2023 activities are divided into two phases: a harbor phase and a sea phase. In the sea phase, the participating navies attend the military drills with their surface and air assets, special operation forces, and maritime teams.

They are involved in various activities, including maneuvers, weapon firing drills, maritime interdiction operations, flying operations, search and rescue Exercises, and international fleet reviews. The harbor activities include seminars, discussions, demonstrations, and cultural activities. Renowned scholars and professional experts on contemporary maritime security critically

**The AMAN Naval Exercises are the proof of interoperability between regional and extra-regional navies to display a united resolve against terrorism and crimes in the maritime domain including piracy**

examine the prevalent maritime challenges and chalk out their solutions.

The Ministry of Maritime Affairs is also holding International Maritime Expo & Conference (PIMEC) on the sideline of AMAN-23 in Karachi. PIMEC aims to showcase Pakistan's maritime potential, i.e. investment and collaboration in the fields of Port Operations, Maritime Logistics, Sea transportation, Shipbuilding & Repair, Ship Breaking, Fisheries and Aquaculture, sea bed resource exploration, Maritime Training and Education, Coastal

50,000 sq km Continental Shelf. Its Oceanic resources include conventional maritime industries, fisheries, coastal tourism, maritime transport, etc., and newly emerging areas of aquaculture and marine biotechnology, deep sea-bed mining, resource extraction, oceanic renewable energy, and maritime tourism.

Moreover, Pakistan's geographical location, three ports—Karachi, Qasim, and Gwadar—and newly developed road infrastructure make

**The AMAN Naval Exercises demonstrate Pakistan's commitment to peace, contribute towards regional maritime security, and enhance cooperation.**



Tourism, Renewable Energy Generation, Environmental

Protection, Marine Engineering Equipment and Real estate development along the coast. The analysts declared that the 21st century is the century of the Blue Economy. According to World Bank, "the Blue Economy concept seeks to promote economic growth, social inclusion, and the preservation or improvement of livelihoods while at the same time ensuring environmental sustainability of the oceans and coastal areas. At its core, it refers to decoupling socio-economic development through ocean-related sectors and activities from environmental and ecosystem degradation. An important challenge of the Blue Economy is thus to realize that the sustainable management of ocean resources requires collaboration across nation-states and the public-private sectors, on a global scale."

Pakistan is an important littoral state having a 1000 km long coastline, about 240,000sq.km Exclusive Economic Zone and the extended

the country very attractive for regional and global merchandise. Notably, these three ports provide alternative sea access to China, landlocked Afghanistan, and Central Asian Republics. Pakistan provides these landlocked states with the shortest route to the sea. Hence, the PIMEC is a progressive initiative to highlight Pakistan's vast potential for Blue Economy.

Pakistan Navy has been performing professional maritime diplomacy by holding AMAN Exercises, besides guarding the country's maritime security. Hence, the AMAN-23 demonstrates Pakistan Navy's capability to combat nontraditional threats and project the country's soft power image in the international community.



*The writer is Professor at the School of Politics and International Relations, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan.*



# A recipe for Pakistan's economic revival

*Maritime is not just a sector but a parallel economy, where various sectors of the economy meet.*

**Huma Baqai**

“Maritime Blindness” is not an option anymore. In the twenty-first century, the concept of the Blue Economy has become increasingly popular. The concept was first coined by Gunter Pauli in 2010, the author of the book *The Blue Economy: 10 Years, 100 Innovations and 100 Million Jobs*. Oceans are now seen as drivers of human development, source of food material, and space.

The Blue Economy includes established

conventional ocean industries like fisheries, tourism, and maritime transport, as well as new and emergent activities like offshore renewable energy, aquaculture, seabed extractive operations and marine biotechnology, and bioprospecting. The Blue Economy is central to the green ecosystem. Oceans produce up to 70 percent of the oxygen we breathe, while nearly 40 percent of the world’s population depends on marine and coastal biodiversity for livelihood. For these

reasons, the “blue” component of the “green” transition cannot be overlooked.

The Blue Economy is the future of sustainable growth for the world and Pakistan. It’s our path from scarcity to abundance. It has the potential to create jobs for our jobless youth, stimulate the anemic economic growth, mitigate the impact of climate change, and help address the scarcity of food for our growing population. The total worth of Pakistan’s blue economy sector is more than \$100 billion, however, the annual revenue generated is only \$450 million. Pakistan had declared the year 2020 as the blue economy year and has also included the Blue Economy in the 2025 Vision Goal of the State.

The Blue Economy of Pakistan offers a way forward through a range of maritime sectors peculiar to the geostrategic and economic constraints of the country. Pakistan falls in the lower-middle-income bracket state, with the economy growing at less than a 3 percent growth rate, whereas the Pakistan Institute of Development



**As per a study, Pakistan’s coastal areas are rich in bio-productivity and biodiversity as they provide huge breeding grounds for commercially important fisheries with a potential resource worth more than \$2 billion annually.**

Economics suggests for Pakistan a potential of sustainable 8 percent growth annually.

This seemingly unachievable target is possible if Pakistan transitions from a traditional economy to the Blue Economy to address the challenges

it faces and align its economy to global trends of sustainable growth. CPEC is the window of opportunity for Pakistan to develop a Maritime industry and fully utilize the potential of the Blue Economy. A Pentagon report notes that China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is associated with pipelines and port construction projects in Pakistan. But with the help of those projects, China “seeks to become less reliant on transporting energy resources through strategic choke points, such as the Strait of Malacca”.

From Pakistan’s perspective, this collaboration complements its geo-economic thrust with its geostrategic compulsions. In 2020-21, China participated in a joint naval Exercise with Pakistan and also supplied strike capable Unmanned Aircraft Systems to Pakistan. In

2015, Pakistan purchased eight Yuan class submarines for more than \$3 billion. In 2017 and 2018, China sold four naval frigates to Pakistan. Pakistan is also a member of the China-led Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization.

South Asian states such as India and Bangladesh are earning billions of dollars from the blue economy. Pakistan’s present-day maritime revenue projection stands at \$183 million which is far behind our neighbors including India and Bangladesh, whose estimated projections stand at \$5.6 and \$6 Billion respectively. Important aspects of the Blue Economy have been ignored over the years, although the actual potential of Pakistan’s blue economy is estimated to be more than US\$ 100 billion.



to 0.6 % percent to the country's GDP. This is indicative of the untapped potential and growth prospects of the sector.

Effective management of The Blue Economy could fetch the global economy \$1.5 trillion. As per Global Investment trends, 35% of global green investment is in the power sector, 29% in transport, and 11% in water infrastructure; Pakistan's progress is not stellar. The blue economy in Pakistan, despite the BRI focus on it and Pakistan being a part of it, has not

China is also now more focused on Maritime Silk Route rather than the Belt and Road Initiative. Thus, improving the status of mangroves and the eco-friendly development of ports mentioned in CPEC makes good sense (blue partnership). The importance of the blue economy is evident from the fact that life below water has been incorporated into sustainable development goals (SDGs).

developed sufficiently. It remains a very unexplored domain that does not receive the requisite attention of policymakers. Pakistan's maritime sector is confronted with governance issues, poor technology, marine pollution, and the destruction of mangroves. A globally sustainable model has been made unsustainable in Pakistan because of the aforementioned issues.

Pakistan shares maritime boundaries with Iran, Oman, and India; claims an enormous Exclusive Economic Zone of 240,000 sq km and a continental shelf giving an additional 50,000 sq km. Despite a tremendously rich coast and a huge mass of water at its disposal, the country has not been able to develop into a true maritime nation. The Majority of the world's population is concentrated around the coasts, however, in case of Pakistan, most of the coastline is scarcely inhabited. Innovative interventions are needed.

To explore the blue economy potential of Pakistan fully, there is a need for long-term and consistent policies along with monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, besides seeking inclusive and holistic contributions from all stakeholders. We need policy reforms to boost

**The Worth of Pakistan's blue economy sector is more than \$100 billion, however, the annual revenue generated is only \$450 million.**

investors' confidence, and development of special maritime industrial zones, we also have to work towards the concept of "greener shipping" by 2050. Pakistan critically needs to fill the gap between education and maritime research and improve industry-

academia linkages to support policies through research.

As per a study, Pakistan's coastal areas are rich in bio-productivity and biodiversity as they provide huge breeding grounds for commercially important fisheries with a potential resource worth more than \$2 billion annually. Pakistan's fishing sector only contributes 0.4%



*The writer is Rector, Millennium Institute of Technology and Entrepreneurship (MiTE), Karachi*



# National Radio and Telecommunication Corporation

is a high tech industry engaged in manufacturing of telecommunication equipment in Pakistan



NRTC Stands with Pakistan Navy for Multinational Naval Exercise AMAN-23, wherein regional and extra-regional navies across the global participating to share experiences to promote regional cooperation and stability



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# Revisiting maritime security

*By fostering a culture of cooperation and collaboration, a framework like AMAN Exercise can help build the capacity of regional littorals to effectively address security challenges in the region.*

**Commodore Sohail Ahmad Azmie**



The Indian Ocean is a vital region for global commerce and energy security. Over 60% of the world's oil supplies, and more than 80% of the world's seaborne trade in petroleum products transit, through the Indian Ocean. Given its strategic importance, ensuring the security of the Indian Ocean is crucial for regional stability and global peace.

The Indian Ocean, for most of its recent history has depended significantly on extra-regional forces for ensuring maritime security. AMAN Exercise, held in the waters of the Indian Ocean region, is an important initiative aimed at enhancing maritime security in the region.

It argues well for both the nations in the region and beyond to come closer and operate together to realize and own maritime security. Organized by the Pakistan Navy biennially since 2007, the exercise aims to promote regional peace and stability by fostering a common understanding and approach to maritime security issues.

The exercise involves participation from more than 40 countries, including the United States,



making seas secure for economic benefits.

The Indian Ocean region faces a number of maritime security challenges, including piracy, terrorism, illegal fishing, human trafficking, and drug smuggling, which threaten the stability and security of the region and have a direct impact on the global economy.

For example, piracy off the coast of Somalia had resulted in increased insurance costs, rerouting of shipping lanes, and a decline in trade and investment. Though the piracy in this particular part has receded, but its occurrence in near future cannot be entirely ruled out. Drugs continue to pour in despite numerous catches in recent past through Pakistan maritime forces' ships and other vessels operating in the region.

As regard to extra-regional constructs, the CTF-150 and CTF-151 are two naval task forces operating in the Indian Ocean region. CTF-150 is part of the US-led Combined Maritime Forces and is based in Bahrain. CTF-151 is a multinational task force established by the Combined Maritime Forces to counter piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia.

**The Indian Ocean region faces a number of maritime security challenges, including piracy, terrorism, illegal fishing, human trafficking, and drug smuggling, which threaten the stability and security of the region and have a direct impact on the global economy.**

China, Russia, Iran, and India, among others. The exercise involves a variety of activities, including search and rescue operations, anti-piracy

Both of these task forces have substantial number of foreign ships, which may not be entirely familiar with the region and regional sensitivities. While both task forces play an important role in ensuring the security of the Indian Ocean, they also highlight the dependence on extra-regional forces



**AMAN Exercise can help reduce the dependence on extra-regional forces in addressing security challenges in the Indian Ocean.**

in addressing security challenges in the region.

AMAN Exercise can help reduce the dependence on extra-regional forces in addressing security challenges in the Indian Ocean. It provides a platform for regional littorals to work together



and develop a common understanding and approach to maritime security issues.

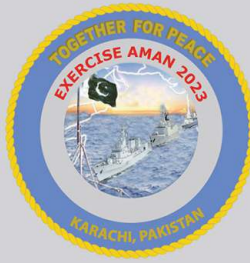
By fostering a culture of cooperation and collaboration, a framework like AMAN can help build the capacity of regional littorals to effectively address security challenges. AMAN is not suggestive of a 'military alliance' type architecture that we once had during the Cold War, but it asks for voluntarily participation based on regional interests, while working with extra-regional countries. It is attempting to reinvigorate the spirit of 'region-owned and region-led' approach that could best answer the myriad issues that the Indian Ocean finds itself in.

AMAN exercise provides an important initiative for enhancing maritime security in the Indian Ocean region. The Indian Ocean is a vital region for global commerce and energy security, and ensuring its security is crucial for regional stability and global peace. A region-centric maritime framework, based on cooperation, collaboration, and information sharing among participating countries, is crucial for addressing the security challenges in the region.

By fostering a culture of cooperation and collaboration, a framework like AMAN Exercise can help build the capacity of regional littorals to effectively address security challenges in the region.



*The writer is a senior naval officer and regularly writes on Blue Economy and maritime affairs.*



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# From the sea blindness to awareness

*The event is aimed at promoting harmony and linkages between industries, consumers, businesses, and academia at the national and international levels, besides pivoting on strategizing diplomacies in technology and progression.*

**Dr. Maliha Zeba Khan**



Exhibitions, exercises, training, conferences, symposia, and field tours are efficient tools of diplomacy. States do use these tools commonly to extend persuasive and cooperative diplomacy, and the outcome is pretty effective enhancing intra-regional and inter-regional relations at all levels.

Adding spatiotemporal dimension augments efficacy, and synthesizing and strategizing such activities can culminate in supplemented dividends. The maritime-related event of the Pakistan International Maritime Expo and Conference (PIMEC) is one such event, which is going to be held on 10-12 February 2023 in Karachi.

PIMEC 2023 is aimed at promoting harmony and linkages between industries, consumers, businesses, and academia at the national and international levels. The concept of PIMEC 2023 is pivoting on strategizing diplomacies in harmony with technology and progression.

Technology is a word that resonates well with the development and progression of the states. But this is not the end. Rather every technological advancement has opened new vistas. Particularly, interstate and inter-regional relations have gone through undeniable shifts with every new technology making it a cornerstone of emerging political and academic developments at the international level.

**Oceans host economic opportunities with the potential to maximize employment resulting in inter-connected policies and a sustainable economy.**

The industrial revolution changed the power quotient of the world giving way to new superpowers. The two World Wars, Cold War, and then the post-Cold War era, all were marred with newer technologies that changed world politics on one hand and initiated novel topics

and areas into the academic realm on other hand.

The same has been done with developments linked with oceanic spaces. The journey which started with logs sailing in waters, and people trying to traverse through larger bodies of water has now entered the phase of motherships, complex vessels, rigging and exploration platforms, and aircraft carriers



where every single day is bringing afore new machines, digitization and digitalization of previous technologies. That has given numerous opportunities to states and non-state actors to reconfigure their policy choices and to enter into newer kinds of diplomacy and ventures involving newer technologies of traditional and non-traditional avenues.

Nonetheless, oceans cover 70 percent of the earth; however, 30 percent of the land part makes up a mindset that is dominant and reflects a certain type of sea blindness. This oblivion toward seas has taken its toll on the growth and development of nation-states. Sea blindness has affected spatiotemporal foreign relations which could bring immense monetary and non-monetary dividends to littoral states.

Oceans host economic opportunities with the potential to maximize employment resulting in inter-connected policies and a sustainable economy. The vast array of maritime and coast-related economic activities, now known as Blue Economy, range from shipping, fishing and seafood, hydrocarbons, several other minerals and gases, energy, tourism, and communication to geo-politico-commercial activities which essentially require reconfiguration of foreign policies to maximize

stakes as well as gains. Interestingly, all such economic activities have a strong impact on societies in terms of growth and development and the underlying factor is the advancement of technology and the introduction of further mechanization to processes.

Pakistan is a coastal state situated at very significant coordinates in terms of proximity with energy-rich Middle East and Central and Northern Asia, physical presence points of great powers in the region, and key regional actors. It has emerged as the focal point of the contemporary era's geopolitics and geo-economics indicating unique approaches to economic connectivity (g2g and b2b) and social connections (p2p). It is Pakistan's location that enables it to become a rimland connection toward the hinterlands of Afghanistan, China, and Central Asian Republics. The juxtaposing of the Maritime Silk Road (MSR) with China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) at Gwadar port has added another dimension to the Blue Economy of Pakistan.

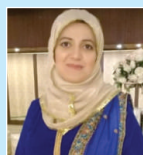
Maritime technologies have not only advanced the modes of transportation for trade and commerce, movement of passengers, recreation, and search and rescue activities; but it has increased opportunities for cooperation and collaboration. It involves widened kinetic and non-kinetic diplomatic activities like economic diplomacy, commercial diplomacy, science and technological diplomacy, digital diplomacy, education diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, and naval diplomacy. Besides the widening of diplomacy and foreign policies, maritime technologies have deepened the understanding of political moves, economic maneuvering, and naval wisdom making it more 'smart'.

Since seas and oceanic spaces are believed to be shared responsibility and common heritage, there is the likelihood of cooperation and collaboration on which Pakistan has structured its idea of PIMEC 2023. Though not novel as states use the means of exhibitions for displaying their capabilities and to market them in the world, Pakistan has launched the concept of PIMEC with massive potential for connectivity, investment opportunities, learning from each other's experiences, and academic knowledge sharing. The spectrum of products, systems, and services, participants and stakeholders

coming from different backgrounds, and opportunities like ship/ crew building, renewable energy, offshore oil drilling, marine biotechnology, desalination, and fisheries will be important features of the event. Other major avenues which could be explored are maritime logistics, technology transfers, defense manufacturers, ship repair, ship breaking, maritime training, tourism, environmental protection, and real estate business along the coast.

All products, services, and systems under one roof as PIMEC 2023 is a complacent idea that is being made possible by Pakistan which is being led by the Pakistan Navy with cooperation from the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, Badar Expo Solutions, and other agencies and departments. Besides G2G, B2B, and P2P opportunities of interaction and joint ventures, one very significant outcome would be confidence building, soft image building of Pakistan, and positivity toward regionalism and global efforts to attain SDGs and to get rid of socioeconomic disparities, hunger, and poverty, environmental protection and marine biodiversity. Another significant feature is the International Maritime Conference which is going to be organized by the National Institute of Maritime Affairs (NIMA) during PIMEC 2023. This academic and scholarly event will provide an opportunity to interact at the level of academia and industry to enhance their linkages and boost collaborative focused research to deal with emergent challenges related to the maritime industry and environment.

The well-coordinated effort in the form of PIMEC 2023 by the Pakistan Navy and Ministry of Maritime Affairs besides other organizations, agencies, and departments is a distinct event, which will play a remarkable role in extending effective yet unique diplomacy involving changing trends and technological advancements at the global level. That is going to bring a change in the continental mindset and will play a role in bringing a shift from sea blindness to sea awareness.



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# An enabler of the Blue Economy

*New technologies are advancing the frontiers of marine resource development, including bio-prospecting and the mining of seabed mineral resources.*

## Commodore Zafar Iqbal

The oceans cover a large proportion of the earth's surface and make up more than 95 per cent of the biosphere. Seas and Oceans have been used since antiquity but for a variety of reasons their usage has increased tremendously. They provide much of the world's population with food and livelihoods and are a significant means of transport in global trade. The ocean-related economy has played a pivotal role in boosting the world economy worldwide. All advanced cities all over the world are mainly coastal cities. As per estimates, about 40% of

the world population is living within 100 KMs of the coastal area.

The seabed is a major source of hydrocarbons, and exploration in this area is expanding. New technologies are advancing the frontiers of marine resource development, including bio-prospecting and the mining of seabed mineral resources. The sea also offers vast potential for renewable "blue energy production from wind, wave, tidal, thermal and biomass sources.

The potential of the oceans to meet sustainable development needs is enormous, but only if the oceans can be maintained in and/ or restored to a healthy and productive state. The marine and coastal environments also constitute key resources for the important global tourism industry, supporting all aspects of the tourism development cycle, from infrastructure and the familiar "sun, sand, and sea" formula to the diverse and expanding domain of eco-tourism.



The idea of the "blue economy" was conceived at United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012. This conference addressed two key themes: the further development and refinement of the Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development and the advancement of the "green economy" concept. Poverty eradication was identified as a key challenge and focus on the green economy as a tool to achieve both poverty eradication and sustainable development. The blue economy concept has been presented subsequently in many fora and is viewed as an alternative economic model for sustainable development that puts the oceans at the centre of this approach.

Pakistan is also a maritime state. With more than 1000 km of coastline along the Arabian Sea, 240,000 Sq km of Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and 50,000 Sq km of Continental Shelf provide Pakistan with significantly large maritime avenues for exploration. This includes but is not limited to the use of ports and harbours and other coastal infrastructure to handle the country's seaborne trade, exploration of oil, gas, and mineral reserves from the sea, seabed and sub-sea soil mineral, marine and

coastal tourism, coastal economy, shipbuilding and ship breaking industry and fisheries industry.

The fortune of any nation to explore and exploit the benefits of sea resources is hinged on the secure environment. The traditional 'sea power role of naval forces has been both enhanced and diversified through the increased emphasis on the delimitation of

maritime jurisdiction, and increased activity within and across claimed maritime zones. Maintaining peace and security through peacekeeping operations and international diplomacy play important roles in supporting the stability necessary for fostering and growing economic relationships and protecting crucial trade routes, and navies will continue to be important in their traditional military role.

However, in addition to the traditional role, maritime security is increasingly playing a role in guarding against environmental damage and

**The success of the CPEC and the Gwadar Port project is linked to the safe and secure maritime environment in the Indian Ocean region in general and the Arabian Sea in particular.**

policy environmental regulations, such as marine protected areas (MPAs) and fisheries regulations, highlighting the complex intersections with all aspects of the Blue Economy.

The success of the CPEC and the Gwadar Port project is linked to the safe and secure maritime environment in the Indian Ocean region in general and the Arabian Sea in particular. The onus of keeping the Sea Lanes of Communications (SLOCs) open and



protecting Pakistan's coast as well as the ports of Karachi, Bin-Qasim, Ormara, and Gwadar rest with the Pakistan Navy (PN). PN in collaboration with Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) has adopted a multi-pronged approach to deal with the prevailing challenges such as beefing up the security of Gwadar Port, conducting security patrols and coastal Exercises, enhancing Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) and engaging in Collaborative Maritime Security with regional and extra-regional navies.

To develop a modern and competitive maritime sector, healthy and bio-diverse marine environment, sustainable development of maritime sector supporting socio-economic livelihood and future aspiration of the nation. Pakistan Navy, apart from the core tasks, has taken many steps to explore the blue economy potential that include raising of Maritime Centre of Excellence at PN War College and establishing or Joint Maritime Information and Coordination Centre (JMICC) to have a synergic approach. The Centre maintains a requisite level

**With more than 1000 km of coastline along the Arabian Sea, 240,000 Sq km of Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and 50,000 Sq km of Continental Shelf, Pakistan provides significantly large maritime avenues for exploration.**

of information sharing as well as interactions with various national as well as regional stakeholders contributing towards secure and safer maritime activity in its area of responsibility.

Pakistan Navy has now taken another initiative to exhibit the potential of Pakistan's Maritime sector through the Pakistan International Maritime Expo & Conference (PIMEC) planned to be held biennially. The premier edition of PIMEC is being organized by Pakistan Navy under the patronage of the Ministry of Maritime Affairs (MoMA), Govt of Pakistan from 10-12 February 2023 at Expo Centre Karachi.

PIMEC will provide a foundation to bring together stakeholders from diverse maritime industries of hydrocarbon extraction, coastal development, shipping, port infrastructure, fisheries, marine tourism, offshore renewable energy, aquaculture, seabed mining, marine services, maritime security equipment, etc.

Hence, this exhibition will showcase the complete potential of the maritime industry to draw attention to its contribution to the global economy besides raising Maritime awareness among the general populace. The three days event will provide a platform for B2B interaction, joint venture & negotiations with the target customers and decision-makers. In short, PIMEC will draw focus on the immense scope offered by the maritime industry towards a global Blue Economy and spur wider public interest and investments in the rather untapped maritime sector of Pakistan. An International Maritime Conference on the topic of the Blue Economy will also be part of this mega event in which internationally reputed maritime experts will take part.

Another key step by PN for community awareness is the establishment of the Bahria School of Maritime and Applied Sciences (BSMAS) at Bahria University Karachi Campus. Additionally, the arrangement of seminars/webinars is a regular feature to generate awareness among the general masses and bring together all stakeholders.

However, the country's realization of the vast potential in the form of a Blue Economy is dependent upon the need to realize the importance of the sea in the nation's collective consciousness through a well-orchestrated and focused awareness campaign.

To accrue economic benefits, an all-inclusive approach is to endeavour at the national level. A three-pronged strategy: combined vision of all stakeholders, understanding, and inclusiveness of common people especially the coastal community, and innovative policies/projects is considered a hallmark for the purpose.

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*The writer is a senior naval officer and expert on maritime affairs.*

# The Blue Economy uptick

*Reformed maritime business strategies will impact related business sectors such as tourism, airlines, fisheries, and shipping and emerging sectors such as biotechnology and ocean energy.*

**Dr. Sehrish Qayyum**





Economic activity in the ocean is expanding rapidly, driven primarily by changes in global demography, economic growth, trade, rising income levels, climate changes, environment index, and technology. Looking to 2030, many ocean-based industries have the potential to outperform the growth of the global economy, both in terms of value-added services, employment, as well as opportunities they offer.

These industries include offshore wind, tidal, and wave energy; offshore aquaculture; cruise tourism; maritime surveillance, and marine biotechnology. The projections suggest that between 2010 and 2030 on a “business-as-usual” scenario basis, the ocean economy could more than double its contribution to global value-added services and products, reaching over US\$3 trillion by the end of the decade.

The increased pace of marine activities and development is titled as ‘Blue Acceleration’ by marine business experts. Strong growth is expected in marine aquaculture, offshore wind energy, fish processing, shipbuilding, and repair within a decade. Investing in an ocean economy makes economic sense as it will employ approximately 40 million full-time equivalent jobs in a business-as-usual scenario. Even Small Island Developing States (SIDS) through their exclusive economic zones (EEZs) control some 30% of all oceans and seas.

For example, Saint Lucia has a marine reserve the size of Germany, while Tuvalu has an EEZ 27,000 times its land mass. The combined EEZs of Mauritius and Seychelles represent an area

bigger than India. The purpose of referring to these facets is to prospect options for economic growth and investment under collaborative joint ventures among littoral and far-off states. Joint ventures may serve in climate actions by utilizing vast volatile spaces for business as per targets set in COP26.

Pakistan is an important littoral state of the Western Indian Ocean and is following global trends of blue acceleration. The country is blessed with a 1000 Km long coastline from Sir Creek to Jiwani and EEZ & continental shelf covering an area of 290,000 sq km i.e., larger than the combined area of two provinces i.e., Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK).

Pakistan’s coastal belt and the extended maritime zone are replete with living and non-living oceanic resources such as hydrocarbons, minerals, renewable energy, and biotechnology options. Pakistan is continuously seeking international

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**Pakistan’s coastal belt and the extended maritime zone are replete with living and non-living oceanic resources such as hydrocarbons, minerals, renewable energy, and biotechnology options.**

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collaborations to create a perfect blend of indigenous and foreign technologies to expand and strengthen its activities. For this purpose, the first Pakistan International Maritime Expo & Conference (PIMEC) in February 2023 offers an ideal platform to uplink with major industrial and business sectors for economic transformation.

PIMEC 2023 is the premier maritime exhibition in the Asian subcontinent focusing on the maritime sector and industry. It assures

sustainable growth and prosperity as the platform aims to gather stakeholders from diverse maritime industries for hydrocarbon extraction, coastal development, shipping, and port infrastructure, fisheries, marine tourism, offshore renewable energy, aquaculture, seabed mining, marine biotechnology, etc. This exhibition will showcase Pakistan's complete maritime potential to focus on human well-being, social equity, and economic growth.

With run-away climate change and a global economy still reeling from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, investments by littoral

significance of ocean resources is not a zero-sum game. Conserving the ocean protects marine life and generates economic growth for maritime states and business communities alike.

The exhibition is a market appeal to expand the existing market with face-to-face interactions and sharing of interest. Focusing on maximum impact by highlighting unique facts of each project, resources, and untapped areas will open the potential door for investment in Pakistan. In terms of PIMEC 2023 outcomes, the development of

**Pakistan is continuously seeking international collaborations to create a perfect blend of indigenous and foreign technologies to expand and strengthen its own activities.**



nations in their ocean economies also strengthen their resilience to external shocks. But with limited resources, they cannot do it alone.

The business community, both local and international are critical partners. National economic growth is intimately tied to the success of ocean economy strategies by governments. Reformed maritime business strategies will impact related business sectors such as tourism, airlines, fisheries and shipping and emerging sectors such as biotechnology and ocean energy.

Pioneering efforts by Pakistan Navy – PIMEC 2023 will bring together governments and business representatives to seek solutions for current challenges i.e., financing and technology constraints in expanding the ocean economy. Furthermore, the forum will spur a new generation of ocean economy partnerships between the global business community and governments ahead of the fourth United Nations Conference in 2024. PIMEC 2023 is not about business as usual but demonstrates that the

specialized 'Maritime Business and Technology Zones' (MBTZs) along the coastline will increase employment options, reserving investments, and will materialize the idea of economic uplink with regional and international business sectors.

Businessmen attached to marine resources and industry are welcome to make this up-to-the-minute step of the Pakistan Navy successful. They can attract their links and relations from the industry and field to host stalls of their best product i.e., marine gemstones, sea shells, food items, and industrial products along with oil and resource extractors from deep sea areas. It is PN's initiative to win by joining hearts and hands in a conducive environment.



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# A giant leap

*Reliance on oceans has led to diverse economic interactions, which are termed the Blue Economy, covering industries focused on sustainable utilization of ocean-based resources.*

**Reema Shaukat**



Oceans are a vital resource of our planet, containing countless marine species and vast sea bed possessions. Human existence is inherently linked with oceans and seas. The growing world population and increasing food and energy demands coupled with diminishing land resources have persistently compelled the human race to explore alternate measures for our sustenance and economic development.

Besides being the cheapest medium for the transportation of goods, oceans contribute to the world's economy through tourism, fishing, renewable energy production, aquaculture, and seabed resources. Reliance on oceans has led to diverse economic interactions which are termed the blue economy, covering industries focused on sustainable utilization of ocean-based resources.

Pakistan is one blessed country with the possession of this great resource along with all its bounties. We have a vast coastline, 240,000 square kilometers, Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ), a 50,000 sq. km Continental Shelf (CS), and a very vibrant coastal community.

**Pakistan Navy has adopted a comprehensive maritime awareness campaign to sensitize relevant segments of society and policymakers.**

The geographical location of Pakistan is also a significant aspect of our strategic construct. It offers the shortest route to the Indian Ocean for Central Asian Republics, Afghanistan, and western parts of China through Karachi and Gwadar ports, presenting great potential for development at national and regional levels.

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a multi-billion prong of BRI by China, carries land

and sea components. Gwadar serves as its sea component and the projects conceived under CPEC around Gwadar are expected to yield tremendous benefits to our maritime industry. CPEC is thus a manifestation of Pakistan's commitment to utilizing the potential of the Blue Economy.

Pakistan has not been truly focusing on its maritime possessions, yet to safeguard our



maritime territory a very potent navy for the seaward defence of the country as well as Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) for the policing of the area under its jurisdiction are working day and night.

Pakistan Navy especially is not merely discharging its responsibility of defending the country but is also a harbinger of highlighting the importance of maritime resources that the country possesses. The concept of the blue economy is increasingly adopted by developed nations for sustainable growth.

Being cognizant of the importance of the blue economy, Pakistan Navy has adopted a comprehensive maritime awareness campaign to sensitize relevant segments of society and policymakers. Across the globe, Maritime exhibitions provide an ideal platform to showcase various products, systems, and services leading to beneficial business partnerships.

On the same lines, Pakistan International Maritime Expo & Conference (PIMEC) is an

initiative of the Pakistan Navy which is going to be organized under the patronage of the Ministry of Maritime Affairs from the 10th of February to the 12th of February, 2023 to accelerate the development of the maritime sector in Pakistan and reap the benefits of Blue Economy. PIMEC will focus on investment and collaboration in a variety of significant fields.

**Across the globe, Maritime exhibitions provide an ideal platform to showcase various products, systems, and services leading to beneficial business partnerships.**

These include port operations, maritime logistics, sea transportation, shipbuilding and repair, shipbreaking, fisheries and aquaculture, sea bed resource exploration, maritime training and education, coastal tourism, renewable energy generation, environmental protection, marine engineering equipment, and real estate development along the coast. These all are the main components of the Blue Economy, and it is fair enough to note that Pakistan has the potential to progress leaps and bounds in these arenas.

Highlighting Pakistan's vast potential for the blue economy is the core objective of the PIMEC. It is envisaged to provide opportunities for the domestic maritime industry to display products at one forum and interact directly with the international maritime industry. It will extend invitations to maritime and defence equipment manufacturers from around the world for joint ventures, transfer of technology, and research so that Pakistan's industrial setup gets a boost.

It will overall result in reinforcing efforts in the realm of maritime diplomacy. PIMEC is a

wholesome idea as besides the exhibition there will also be an exclusive International Maritime Conference held under the auspices of the National Institute of Maritime Affairs (NIMA). Eminent speakers both domestic and international will exchange views on the latest trends and scientific approaches to various challenges related to the maritime industry. It will be an epoch-making event to highlight Pakistan's maritime potential and the domestic capacity for growth in this sector. PIMEC will provide an ideal opportunity for interactions between the target customers and maritime industry representatives.

A large number of trade and industry participants from the local and international maritime sector are therefore being invited to attend the event. To achieve the objectives of this national-level event, support of relevant ministries, departments and the business community will be mustered and it is thus likely to be a display of well-orchestrated interaction between different segments of government and entities related to the maritime sector. Hence, it will be a great source of learning for everyone via a forum



that will exhibit enormous knowledge on the benefits of the maritime domain hitherto, less realized.



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# The cable connection

*Pakistan needs huge resources for building on a robust, reliable, and efficient system which should be able to monitor, track, identify probable threats to undersea cables and take effective measures to check it.*

## Tahir Amin Choudhry

Succinctly, submarine cables or undersea cables or subsea cables are fiber optics deep in the ocean floor encapsulated in a protective shell and in this present age of communication data comprising of personal or commercial, voice or digital, civil or military, educational or recreational and financial transmissions travel via them. More than 95% of the world's telecommunications traffic travels through about 438 transoceanic cables, which can vary from

17mm to 50 mm and totaling over 1.2 million Km in length which crisscrosses the ocean floors as a physical link between the masses. Undoubtedly, deep below the buxom of the oceans lie the arteries of modern society hidden away in the cold, dark depths of vast seas.

The Submarine Cable network of Pakistan provides instantaneous communication and





consists of eleven international submarine cable systems. Pakistan telecommunication system comprises of PEACE, AAE-1, IMEWE, SRG 1, MENA, GBI, TW1, Orient Express, SEA-ME-WE-3, SEA-ME-WE-4 and SEA-ME-WE 5 and has two landing stations at Karachi & Gwadar. All eleven cable systems use Karachi landing station whereas the Orient Express & PEACE cable systems land at Gwadar as well making Pakistan more resilient in case of some cable failure or issue and more cable systems are under laying process.

Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) is responsible for telecommunication and submarine cable however, unfortunately PTA has failed to fully understand the full implications of its loss or importance.

The internet is responsible for financial transactions of the order of \$10 trillion daily and is tightly intertwined with Pakistan's interconnectivity with submarine cable to get its share. Even temporary damages to cables can have damaging corollaries and depends on how well Pakistan manages submarine cable operations, legislation, and implementation of the laws to safeguard or minimize the damage to the cables being recognized by the UN as "critical communications infrastructure."

Submarine cables are vulnerable to a variety of threats from other commercial users such as an estimated 44.4% of faults are caused by fishing and another 14.6% of cable damage is resulted by anchoring or even from underwater earthquakes / other natural disasters.

Risk analysis indicates two concerns; either being tapped or destroyed - by either a non-state actor, as per some recent isolated incidents of piracy or, more likely, by a state adversary like India imposes the biggest threat exposure especially at the time of tension, conflict, or war. Our foe could also pursue several or all objectives like cutting military or government communications, eliminating internet access for a targeted population, sabotaging an economic competitor, or causing economic disruption for

geopolitical purposes. India can achieve it through four survey ships and six nuclear propelled submarines which reportedly will be equipped with UUVs and in the process to develop undersea drones "Mathsya."

Given the multi-faceted nature of the use, private ownership, and vulnerabilities of submarine cables, international action would necessarily need to leverage different formats to be effective.

**Given the multi-faceted nature of the use, private ownership, and vulnerabilities of submarine cables, international action would necessarily need to leverage different formats to be effective.**

Even though cables are privately managed, maintained, and secured. National authorities have a responsibility to ensure that cable routes are redundant and diverse enough to guarantee their overall resilience. Pakistan is in the great essence to put in order such procedures to safeguard our national marine, security, and communication interests. Unfortunately, neither the Pakistan Navy (PN) nor the Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) is consulted for a pre-laying survey to protect the undersea marine assets. Presently, Pakistan Telecommunications Authority (PTA) has the control for laying of cables both on

ocean and land but possess limited knowledge about maritime affairs.

Huge resources are required for building on a robust, reliable, and efficient system which once put in place should be able to monitor, track, identify probable threats to undersea cables and take effective measures to check it. Pakistan being a resource deficit country should develop Framework of

Cooperation with

Neighboring countries to pool in resource; Qatar, Oman, UAE and Saudi Arabia have invested huge in the submarine cables industry and be convinced for a shared assessment of vulnerabilities.

Pakistan, to first start with, to either acquire a second hand ship commission a new ship for cable operations. This would serve two purposes, firstly precious foreign exchange will be saved, secondly the threat of a foreign ship loitering in own Territorial waters and endangering national security will be eliminated.

Cable companies are always in a rush to repair the damaged cable to minimize the loss effect, the average cost of a single repair is in millions of dollars. Pakistan needs dramatic improvement in the authorization policy, reduction in its processing time and to adopt an E-smart solution for submission and analyzing the complaint throughout the day.



Under the guidelines of UNCLOS, Pakistan should introduce the concept of Cable Protection Zoning to protect submarine cable damages from certain activities such as fishing, anchoring, and dredging such as Canada, New Zealand and Australia has adopted an “integrated zoning management.”

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**Submarine cables are vulnerable to a variety of threats from other commercial users such as an estimated 44.4% of faults are caused by fishing and another 14.6% of cable damage is resulted by anchoring or even from underwater earthquakes / other natural disasters.**

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During the “AMAN Exercise” naval forces participating in the event need to plan and execute in real time operation to detect and repair the fault and take other measures consistent with international law, including UNCLOS, to protect cables outside of national jurisdiction. Pakistan Navy & PMSA need to plan and execute maritime exercises and the development of common rules of engagement and procedures to deal with terrorist attacks on cables and theft of cables on a regular basis.

Pakistan needs to plan for rerouting the telecommunication traffic through other cables to minimize the duration of disruptions irrespective of the causes. Gwadar as a second landing station can be looped with other cable linking systems to bypass the impacted cable area through the collaboration with friendly telecommunication providers.

To ensure timely coordination and prompt processing of the cable repair applications Pakistan needs to appoint Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) as a lead Agency to coordinate national policy and activities on submarine cables. Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) officers possess necessary maritime knowledge hence PMSA to be given a mandate to coordinate a uniform policy on submarine cables under the guidelines of Pakistan Navy. Pakistan Navy should assess the national security implications of all potential sea cables landing on Pakistan waters and to ensure high security standards in case of conflict.

The efforts are needed to equip Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC) with

**Pakistan needs to plan for rerouting the telecommunication traffic through other cables to minimize the duration of disruptions irrespective of the causes.**

specialized cable operations ships to eliminate the lengthy procedure for repairs approval and thus expediting the process. In Pakistan, if a cable is damaged or a threat to the cable system arises, PMSA needs to be given authority to address the situation, to initiate the process for repair and be called upon to respond. The process of institute pre pre-approval be adopted such as cable ship permits be issued and renewed annually, it is imperative that all such

permits are in place prior to the time of a probable cable fault.

Pakistan does not have a policy or any regulations that protect submarine cables from damage by ship's anchoring, dredging, fishing or other activities. UNCLOS recommends adopting laws and regulations to protect submarine cables within territorial waters, but Pakistan has failed to do so till today hence PTA needs to enact a legal



framework for all processes of subsurface cable ops including but not limited to processing of applications, award of contracts, survey ship/crew security clearance, monitor survey of ocean floor, cable laying/repair, security of cables etc.

The Gulf countries have the capacity and ability to lay, repair the cables but the PTA needs to work and plan together to deal with emergency situations better and faster. Pakistan and its allies need to design a contingency plan to be ready and prepared for the consequences of submarine cable failure.

Finally, Pakistan should therefore promote a more comprehensive and holistic legal regime that would safeguard its submarine cable interests.



*The writer is retired Naval officer and striving for the perseverance of the oceans for the prosperity of all.*



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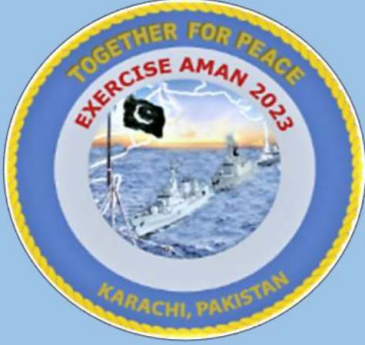
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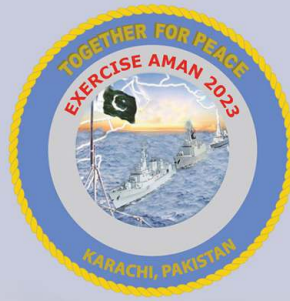
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