



PIMEC A DOT ON HORIZON FOR PAKISTAN'S INDIGENOUS MARITIME FUTURE

History vindicates that land victories may decide battles, but sea power often decides wars and global orders, thus, nations that mastered the seas mastered the world. Sea power has never been a mere question of controlling waves and oceans, it is the ability of a state to influence global events by securing

trade, commerce and strategic reach through maritime strength. Alfred Thayer Mahan, President of US Naval War College and author of "The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783" emphasized that "whoever rules the waves rules the world". Sir Julian Corbett a British naval historian

and geostrategist in his scholarly work "Some Principles of Maritime Strategy" asserts that the importance of "naval strength and maritime commerce has remained a constant driver of geopolitics and geoeconomics." The British Empire remains the most striking example; a small island nation with limited natural

size of continental Pakistan, is shaping a renewed national will to harness the blessings with which the country has been endowed. Allah reveals in the Quran: "It is He who has subjected the sea for you, that you may eat thereof fresh tender meat, and that you may extract from it ornaments which you wear" (Surah An-Nahl 16:14). Pakistan today stands at the cusp of a maritime awakening. Blessed with over 1,000 kilometers of coastline and positioned at the very crossroads of global energy flows and some of the busiest shipping lanes on earth, the country holds immense untapped promise in the maritime domain. Rather than being constrained by past neglect, this realization now offers a unique opportunity to transform Pakistan into a vibrant maritime nation. The seas that surround us are not merely a frontier but a gateway to trade, energy, connectivity, and prosperity. From modernizing ports and shipyards to developing world-class logistics hubs, fisheries, aquaculture, renewable ocean energy and coastal tourism, the scope for investment is vast and promising.

Yet, economic growth at sea cannot be sustained without security. With expanding maritime activity and growing stakes in the Indian Ocean, Pakistan requires a strong shield to safeguard its interests. In this regard, Pakistan Navy has emerged as a dynamic regional force, capable of protecting sea lines of communication and ensuring maritime stability. To strengthen this role further, Pakistan is steadily developing indigenous capabilities in shipbuilding and local production of combat platforms and systems, an essential step towards both self-reliance and strategic autonomy. Gradually shifting from a land-centric mindset to a more balanced geo-economic and maritime approach, the seas are emerging as the new frontier for national growth and security. Pakistan's demographic dividend, expanding industrial base and strategic location make it a natural hub for investors seeking access to regional and global markets. For the maritime industry and all activities linked to the sea, from shipping, logistics, and shipbuilding to marine research, technology and blue economy ventures, the opportunities are not just viable but transformative. In short, Pakistan's geography is now being translated into strategy, opening new horizons for prosperity, security and resilience for those ready to invest in its maritime future.



PN MILGEM CLASS CORVETTE

Amidst this backdrop, Pakistan Navy has consistently taken initiatives to shift the narrative. The Pakistan International Maritime Expo & Conference (PIMEC), inaugurated in 2023, represents a landmark effort. It is more than just an exhibition; it is a platform for bridging local and international stakeholders. The inaugural PIMEC facilitated the signing of multiple Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs), introduced local manufacturers to global buyers, and brought international expertise to Karachi. Its conference segment attracted academicians, policymakers, and strategists, who debated how Pakistan could unlock the potential of its blue economy. PIMEC must be seen alongside other Pakistan Navy initiatives such as the AMAN multinational naval exercise, which demonstrates Pakistan's commitment to regional maritime stability and the Maritime Security Workshop conducted by Maritime Centre of Excellence at PN War College. Together, these initiatives underscore Navy's forward-looking approach at national and international levels; to broaden the maritime discourse beyond naval operations and to positively contribute toward national prosperity.

Yet exhibitions, conferences and exercises will mean little if they are not tied to a larger national strategy of self-reliance. The most critical lesson from the U.S., China, Britain, Japan and South Korea is that maritime power cannot be developed through borrowed technologies or imported visions. It requires indigenous innovation, sustained investment in industrial capacity, and long-term strategic vision. Pakistan must therefore align its industrial policy with its maritime ambitions. Indigenous shipbuilding, maritime research and development and integration of local

technology into naval and commercial platforms and infrastructure are indispensable. Only then can Pakistan leverage its geography, secure its trade and radiate influence into the Indian Ocean region and beyond.

History is unambiguous, nations that harness sea power through self-reliance rewrite the course of world events. Continental powers have lost wars to maritime powers because the ability to secure commerce, protect sea lanes and project influence across oceans has always outweighed land-centric advantages. For Pakistan, PIMEC offers a chance to course-correct. By creating linkages between local industry and global players, by fostering dialogue on maritime security and the blue economy and by championing indigenous development, PIMEC stands as a beacon for the country's maritime future. If Pakistan is to claim its rightful place among maritime nations, it must embrace self-reliance in the maritime sector. Through organizing PIMEC, Pakistan Navy has painted a dot on the horizon and has lit the torch to follow the path for Pakistan's indigenous maritime future.



Cdre Ehsan Ahmed Khan

Cdre Ehsan Ahmed Khan is a PhD scholar of International Relations at the School of Integrated Social Sciences, University of Lahore, and Deputy President Maritime Centre of Excellence at Pakistan Navy War College, Lahore, Pakistan