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Source: Express Tribune Wednesday October 23, 2024

## Experts urge shift from north to south

Discuss maritime challenges focusing on regional connectivity, security

ISLAMABAD

Vice Admiral (R) Ahmad Tasnim on Tuesday urged Pakistan's economic policymakers to shift the 'centre of gravity' of the economy from the north to the south. He made this call while addressing the 2nd seminar in the series on the Blue Economy, titled "Challenges to Maritime Trade," organised by the National Institute of Maritime Affairs (NIMA) in collaboration with the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), according to a news release.

The seminar focused on regional connectivity initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), global and regional security imperatives, the latest technological advancements, and climate-related challenges. Tasnim praised the contributions of the experts and reiterated the need to shift the economy's focus to the south.

In his opening remarks, Vice Admiral (R) Ahmed Saeed, President of NIMA, welcomed the guests and outlined the key themes of the event. Guest of Honour Captain Naeem Sarfraz emphasised the need to include subject-matter experts in policymaking and

advocated for adopting a cost-effective, safe, and green inland water transportation system.

Renowned scholars including Dr Anjum Sarfraz, Dr Hassan Daud, and Dr Maliha Zeba Khan set the stage for panel discussions. The panellists, including Ambassador Nadeem Riyaz, Dr Shabana Fayyaz, Dr Salma Malik, Dr Faiz Hussain, Dr Khurram Iqbal, and Dr Usman Chohan, provided insights into Pakistan's maritime vision, policy gaps, and strategy implementation. They stressed the need to intertwine maritime diplomacy with the global maritime industry, noting that maritime trade generates significant economic activity that contributes to national power.

The participants also praised the Pakistan Navy for expanding the scope of 'Exercise Aman' and introducing the PIMEC initiative to integrate the global maritime industry into Pakistan's economy. They pointed out that throughout history, maritime trade has been the foundation for the rise of major powers.

Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General of ISSI, concluded the seminar by emphasising the need for long-term, inclusive strategic planning to address Pakistan's maritime challenges and to unlock the vast untapped potential in this sector. APP