

**REGIONAL PEACE IMPOSSIBLE TILL END OF GENOCIDE IN IIOJK: AJK
PRESIDENT**



KARACHI, February 13: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) President Sardar Masood Khan has stressed that peace and stability cannot prevail in the region without cessation of genocide and crimes against humanity in the illegally Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

"It is the moral obligation of everyone to raise voice to save the Kashmiri people from the scourge of impending annihilation en masse," he said.

He made these remarks while speaking at the opening session of the ninth International Maritime Conference on "The Development of Blue Economy under a secure and sustainable environment - a shared

future for Western Indian Ocean Region". The conference was jointly hosted by National Institute of Maritime Affairs and Baharia University Karachi on Saturday.

He called upon the international community to come out to stop the illicit transfer of millions of Indian Hindus to the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir. He said that upholding the rule of law and exploring regional peace and stability needed to be made a clear moral choice. The President emphasized that the right of self-determination of the Kashmiri people as mandated by the United Nations must be supported.

Sardar Masood Khan on behalf of the people of Jammu and Kashmir expressed gratitude to Pakistan Maritime Security Agency and Pakistan Navy for naming and inducting PMSS Kashmir in its fleet and said that "this is a great gesture, which has touched our hearts."

The AJK president also congratulated Pakistan Navy for hosting once again the multinational, very popular and very successful /Exercise AMAN. "Pakistan believes in and strives for peace and this Exercise is a solid manifestation of its diligence towards peace," he asserted and added that we are proud of Pak Navy's critical role in defending Pakistan and its continual preparedness to deter any aggression against the nation.

Turning to the blue economy, Sardar Masood Khan said that must change our mindset about Pakistan's economy. We have a coastline of

1,000 kilometres, and a combined maritime area of 290,000 square kilometres, which includes territorial waters, contiguous zone, Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and continental shelf.

He regretted that we have the mindset of a landlocked country despite having abundant maritime wealth in our front yard, which connects us with the Indian Ocean Region and other seas, oceans and nations. This “sea blindness” has to be addressed. If we integrate our land-based economy with Blue Economy, we can have a one trillion dollar GDP before the end of this decade, he said and added that by investing in the blue economy, Pakistan would really go global.

At present, he went on to say, we have the Karachi Port, Port Qasim, and Gwadar Port. But Gwadar Port, big though it is, should be seen as a beginning. We need to develop new ports and harbours at Jiwani, Gadani, Ormara and Pasni, and many other points for economic and maritime security purposes.

He added that besides coastal areas and territorial waters, Pakistan’s Exclusive Economic Zoon (EEZ) and the high seas have rich resources waiting to be exploited. The areas for exploration are oil and gas, minerals, shale, biodiversity, including food, drinkable water, animals and plants, and renewable energy etc.

He proposed to set up a commission to map out available and

exploitable oceanographic resources for our Blue Economy in the EEZ and beyond. Pakistan Navy may wish to take an initiative in this regard or act as a catalyst amongst national stakeholders said that AJK president.

“The blue economy will spawn many ancillary maritime industries like tourism in the coastline and baseline areas, which have both mesmerizing natural beauty and rich cultural heritage.”

He noted that nearly 95 per cent of Pakistan’s international commerce is seaborne. Pakistan National Shipping Corporation PNSC carries slightly more than 10 per cent of the merchandise while the bulk is handled by foreign carriers.

Sardar Masood Khan opined that de-nationalization and development of private competitor enterprises is a viable solution to build our shipping lines and ocean liners to transport freight and passengers. Our shipping industry has to grow out of its perennial infancy and embrace this challenge, and so should the supporting institutional framework, he added.

Enumerating dividends of the Blue Economy, he said that enhanced regional connectivity will be the biggest dividend as it will reinforce the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and link up East, Central, West and South Asia through co-dependent infrastructure, industry and supply chains.

Economic geography will define their relations rather than military

competition, he added.

Equally important, he said, is a conscious diplomatic effort on our part to assuage fears of Western nations about CPEC because for our Blue Economy to take off, we need the support of countries and enterprises from East and West, North and South.

He expressed the view that it is important to project Gwadar as the sister port of Chabahar, Bandar Abbas and Dubai ports and other important seaports of the Gulf region, and this collaboration could extend to even Djibouti, Hambantota and even Singapore. He proposed Pakistan should take an initiative to form such a network to intertwine these ports. These ports could be corralled as Peace Ports.

The AJK president said that as Pakistan's Blue Economy develops, the nation will bolster and expand its maritime security assets to protect sea lanes or, to be more precise, Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC) against aggression, piracy, terrorism and transnational crimes such as illicit trafficking of drugs, arms and humans.

About Pakistan's full national security, he said that Pakistan's deterrence has to be absolutely credible. It has to be full-spectrum to combat the whole range of asymmetric, conventional and strategic threats. No component of the strategic triad would be weak, least of all Pak Navy, which defends along the coast and territorial waters of Pakistan. "It is high time Pakistan started planning for a blue water navy. In the long run, a blue water navy and Blue Economy will

dovetail naturally, he added.

The conference was also addressed by President of Pakistan, Dr Arif Alvi, Chief of Naval Staff Admiral M. Amjad Khan Niazi, CEO ZERI Gunter Pauli, director General NIMA Vice Admiral Abdul Aleem and others.