

WORLD MARITIME DAY

From Policy to Practice: Powering Maritime Excellence.



MESSAGES



Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry
Federal Minister Maritime Affairs

On World Maritime Day 2026, observed under the International Maritime Organization's theme, "From Policy to Practice: Powering Maritime Excellence", I extend my greetings to the global maritime community.

The theme highlights the need to translate international maritime conventions, regulations and policies into effective action aboard ships and across port operations. Their value ultimately depends on how effectively they are implemented in practice.

The Ministry of Maritime Affairs remains committed to bridging the gap between policy and implementation through meaningful, measurable and sustainable measures. Our efforts are focused on protecting the marine environment, strengthening maritime and navigational safety, improving the resilience of the shipping sector and unlocking the potential of the blue economy.

The observance also provides an opportunity to reaffirm our collective commitment to turning policies into practice, regulations into responsible action and vision into tangible maritime progress.

This requires close cooperation among policymakers, maritime institutions, industry stakeholders, seafarers and port authorities. By working together and maintaining a strong focus on implementation, we can build a maritime sector that is safer, more efficient, sustainable and globally competitive, while ensuring that Pakistan is better positioned to benefit from its maritime resources and opportunities.



Rear Admiral Shahid Ahmed SI(M), S.Bt (Retd.)
Chairman, Karachi Port Trust

From Policy to Practice: Powering Maritime Excellence"

World Maritime Day 2026 provides an important opportunity to reaffirm our collective commitment to translating maritime policies, regulations and aspirations into meaningful action. The IMO theme, "From Policy to Practice: Powering Maritime Excellence," aptly reminds us that true maritime progress is achieved when policy is transformed into safer operations, greater efficiency, environmental responsibility and tangible benefits for people and economies.

At Karachi Port Trust, we are committed to making this principle a reality. The record performance of Karachi Port during FY 2025–26—with 55.5 million tonnes of cargo and 2.75 million TEUs of container throughput handled and 2,115 vessels serviced—reflects the dedication of our workforce and our sustained focus on operational excellence.

Our progress is also reflected in international performance. Karachi Port improved by 30 positions in the Container Port Performance Index (CPPI) 2025, rising from 99th to 69th globally, demonstrating the impact of continuous efforts towards efficiency, productivity and service quality, while its port Liner Connectivity rose to 343 in Q2 2026. Pakistan's overall Liner Shipping Connectivity Index ranking also improved from 35th to 34th.

Yet, maritime excellence extends beyond cargo and vessel statistics. KPT is advancing digitalisation, smart and green port initiatives, modernisation, deeper and more efficient navigation, environmental stewardship and human-capital development. Investments in modern, automated and environmentally sustainable cargo-handling systems further demonstrate our commitment to building a future-ready port.

Our ongoing marine pollution control and floating-debris collection efforts, infrastructure development, dredging and navigation improvements, capacity-building initiatives and focus on resilient port operations are practical expressions of our commitment to a safer, cleaner, smarter and more connected maritime future for Pakistan.

As Pakistan's principal gateway to international trade, Karachi Port has a vital role in supporting the country's economic growth and advancing the objectives of Maritime Vision 2047–2147. We remain committed to strengthening Karachi Port as a competitive, sustainable, resilient and increasingly technology-enabled maritime hub, while creating greater opportunities for trade, investment and the wider blue economy.

On this World Maritime Day, I pay tribute to our seafarers, port workers, maritime professionals, business partners and all stakeholders whose commitment keeps the maritime sector moving.

Let us continue to move from policy to practice—from vision to action, and from action to excellence—to build a stronger maritime future for Pakistan.

World Maritime Day 2026: From Policy to Practice, Powering Maritime Excellence

Muhammad Asif Shaikh

World Maritime Day 2026 will be observed on Thursday, September 24, with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) focusing global attention on the theme "From Policy to Practice: Powering Maritime Excellence." For the first time, the World Maritime Day theme has been adopted for a two-year period, covering 2026 and 2027.The theme emphasizes the importance of translating international maritime policies, regulations and standards into effective action across ships, ports and maritime administrations. It highlights that policies can achieve their intended benefits only when they are properly implemented, enforced and reflected in everyday maritime operations.The word "Powering" underlines the importance of capacity building, technical cooperation, training and knowledge sharing. The maritime sector is undergoing rapid technological and operational changes, including the introduction of new fuels, digitalization, automation, cybersecurity and efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. These developments require skilled personnel, modern infrastructure, strong institutions and continued international cooperation. Maritime Excellence" reflects the broader objective of ensuring shipping operations that are safe, secure, efficient and environmentally responsible. Shipping remains a cornerstone of the global economy, with more than 80 percent of international trade



transported by sea. Ships carry essential commodities, food, energy resources, manufactured goods and raw materials, connecting producers, consumers and markets around the world.Millions of people working at sea and ashore support this vast international system. Seafarers, port workers, ship operators, maritime authorities, inspectors and other professionals play vital roles in maintaining the maritime supply chain. Training and professional competence are therefore central to maritime safety. The IMO's STCW Convention establishes minimum international standards for the training, certification and watchkeeping of seafarers.Environmental protection is another key element of maritime excellence. The IMO has developed international measures addressing oil pollution, harmful substances, sewage, garbage, ballast water, ship recycling and greenhouse gas emissions, supporting efforts to protect oceans and marine ecosystems.The 2026-2027 theme also contributes to several UN Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 9 on industry and infrastructure, SDG 13 on climate action, SDG 14 on life below water and SDG 17 on partnerships.Digitalization is further transforming the maritime industry. Modern ports and maritime authorities are increasingly adopting digital systems, Maritime Single Windows and cybersecurity measures to improve efficiency, safety and information management.World Maritime Day 2026 therefore provides an opportunity for governments, maritime administrations, shipping companies, port authorities, seafarers and other stakeholders to turn international commitments into practical results. By moving from policy to practice, the maritime community can contribute to safer seas, cleaner oceans, stronger economies and a more resilient global shipping system.



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From Policy to Practice: Powering Maritime Excellence in Pakistan

Pakistan is fundamentally a maritime nation. Its coastline, ports, shipping routes, fisheries, coastal communities and strategic location on the Arabian Sea provide the country with an important gateway to regional and international markets. Yet maritime potential is not converted into national prosperity simply by possessing ports or having access to the sea. Maritime excellence emerges when national policies are translated into institutions, infrastructure, technology, human capital and measurable operational performance.

This is the essence of the theme "From Policy to Practice: Powering Maritime Excellence." The challenge for Pakistan, is not just limited to recognizing the importance of the maritime sector but to translate its maritime ambitions into practical outcomes



A Maritime Vision for Pakistan

Pakistan's Ministry of Maritime Affairs has articulated a vision to position the country as a leading maritime nation and regional trans-shipment hub through modern ports, efficient logistics, environmental sustainability, innovation and global connectivity. Its mission also emphasises policy reform, ease-of-doing business, improved hinterland connectivity, transit trade and the well-being of coastal communities.

This vision is profoundly connected with the broader concept of the Blue Economy. The government has identified fragmented governance, outdated port and shipping technologies, marine pollution, inadequate infrastructure and insufficient research and innovation as critical bottlenecks requiring policy intervention.

Modern Ports as Engines of Economic Growth

Karachi Port and Port Qasim remain vital to Pakistan's international trade and industrial supply chains, while Gwadar holds significant long-term potential as a hub for regional connectivity. Pakistan's official maritime vision explicitly seeks stronger hinterland connectivity and greater participation in transit and trans-shipment trade. Recent initiatives have further reinforced this direction, with a focus on strengthening Pakistan–China port–rail connectivity under CPEC. The transition from policy to practice requires ports to compete increasingly in efficiency rather than geography alone

Digital gate systems, Port Community Systems, automated cargo handling, artificial intelligence, smart scheduling, electronic documentation and integrated customs procedures can reduce delays and improve predictability.

Therefore, it is pertinent for Pakistan to establish measurable targets for port performance, including vessel turnaround time, container dwell time, logistics cost, digital clearance time, berth productivity and customer satisfaction. Tracking these indicators will aid in identifying gaps and driving improvements.

The Way Forward

Pakistan has considerable maritime potential, but maritime excellence will ultimately be determined by execution. In a positive shift, the Ministry's recent policy direction places modern ports, digitalization, blue-economy development, sustainability and regional connectivity at the centre of the maritime agenda. Its 2024–25 Year Book also highlights policy reforms, port efficiency, digitalisation, international cooperation and a longer-term ambition to develop a $20 billion blue economy by 2035.

The next phase should therefore concentrate on five interconnected priorities: modern and digitally integrated ports; competitive shipping and maritime services; green and climate-resilient maritime development; highly skilled maritime human capital; and stronger government industry academia collaboration.

Bahria University: Translating Maritime Policy into Knowledge and Human Capital

An important element in Pakistan's journey towards maritime excellence is the contribution of its universities and research institutions. Among these, Bahria University occupies a distinctive position because of its sustained engagement with maritime education, research, policy analysis and professional development.

Pakistan cannot build modern ports, introduce maritime digitalization, develop sustainable shipping or expand its blue economy without an educated workforce. Bahria University contributes to this requirement by connecting academic education with the operational, managerial, technological and policy dimensions of the maritime sector.

At the Karachi Campus, maritime education has developed beyond the traditional study of ships and navigation towards the broader business and management dimensions of the maritime economy. BU's current academic listings include four-year and two-year BS Maritime Business and Management pathways, a two-year MS Maritime Ports and Shipping Management, an MS Maritime Trade and Logistics and an LLM in International and Maritime Law. The university's academic roadmap also lists BS Coastal and Marine Sciences, reflecting the multidisciplinary nature of contemporary maritime education.

BSMAS as a Platform for Maritime Excellence

Within this framework, the Bahria School of Maritime & Applied Sciences (BSMAS) serves as a timely, high-impact platform by bridging maritime education with applied disciplines. Through its academic programmes like the BS in Maritime Business and Management, MS in Port and Shipping Management and MS in Maritime Trade and Logistics directly align classroom learning with the demands of the maritime industry.

BSMAS is also actively expanding its research and curriculum into smart ports, digitalization, maritime cybersecurity, green shipping, and decarbonization. This interdisciplinary approach is essential because the modern maritime sector no longer operates in silos. Developing a smart port, for instance, isn't a task for port managers alone, it demands end-to-end collaboration among maritime experts, engineers, environmental scientists, economists, logistics specialists, software engineers and data analysts. Bahria University's BSMAS is at the forefront of this effort, actively building the skilled talent pool required for the nation's maritime future. The school prioritizes practical, hands-on learning through routine industry engagement, guest lectures from seasoned professionals, internships, applied research projects and field visits to major ports and operational facilities.

By actively linking academia with industry, we can bridge the practical skill gap.



Pakistan Maritime Science and Technology Park (PMSTP)

Another major milestone in driving maritime innovation is Bahria University's association with the Pakistan Maritime Science and Technology Park (PMSTP). PMSTP acts as a nexus between education, applied research and commercial enterprises. Its potential areas include smart-port technologies, maritime digitalization, green shipping, cybersecurity, ocean and climate research, professional training and technology-based entrepreneurship. By supporting applied research, start-ups, prototypes and the commercialization of knowledge, Bahria University and PMSTP can contribute significantly to a knowledge-based blue economy and strengthen Pakistan's maritime capabilities.

Bahria University's Triple Helix approach comes to life through joint ventures like the Bahria School of Maritime & Applied Sciences (BSMAS) and the Pakistan Maritime Science and Technology Park (PMSTP). This collaboration creates a direct bridge where government leadership, academia and private industry work shoulder-to-shoulder on applied research, digital infrastructure and commercial innovation.

Pakistan's Maritime Excellence Triangle

Realizing deep maritime reform isn't a task for a single entity, it requires a coordinated team effort across government, academia and industry. This synergy is captured in the Pakistan Maritime Excellence Triangle. Here, the government provides strategic policy and regulation, academic institutions like Bahria University supply cutting-edge research and market-ready talent and industry partners bring the necessary capital, technological adoption and job opportunities.

When these three forces operate in sync instead of silos, they successfully translate policy into practice converting academic knowledge into economic growth, environmental stewardship and real-world impact across Pakistan's maritime landscape.

WORLD MARITIME DAY
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