

Mullah's vs Marathon

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Contents

- [IT'S ONLY A RACE](#)
- [RELIGIOUS PARTIES VOW TO \(...\)](#)

Editorial

The News International, January 27 and 29, 2006.

IT'S ONLY A RACE

Once again the MMA and the government are at loggerheads over the Lahore marathon being held today. The MMA is bent upon stopping this 'vulgar activity' from taking place at all cost. They have vowed to peacefully line the racing track during the mixed marathon as their protest against such 'satanic activities'. The first phase of this peaceful protest has been demonstrated on Friday when the MMA workers clashed with the police, the former pelting stones and the latter using teargas and batons to gain control. Public property was wrecked and 10 policemen and several workers were injured. Arrests were made which added further determination to the MMA leadership to continue their protest against the marathon.

Due to similar conditions created last year by this party, there has been a decline in participants registering for the event from 17,000 from 16 countries last year to half the figure at 8000 this year. The leadership said that there will be no protest if the women participants raced within the confines of Gaddafi Stadium. To counter violence the authorities have alerted rescue teams to handle any untoward incident during the marathon.

Interference of the leaders of a religious-cum-political party in a single sporting event isn't becoming of them. In fact it is ludicrous that this party can find the time to protest and clash with the police to stop 'satanic activities' such as sports, but doesn't have the time to deal with real issues facing the masses. Instead of trying to sabotage a sporting event restricted to Lahore, they should focus on the more important issues such as the rise in prices of most consumer products, rampant crime in society, lack of education and health facilities, and unemployment.

The Lahore marathon shouldn't be made into a religious or moral controversy. It is one of the few events where Pakistan can invite

foreign visitors to participate in and show them that Pakistan is not the terrorist breeding ground that everyone thinks it to be. The MMA should not view such events as 'satanic' or 'vulgar' but as an opportunity for Pakistan to form congenial relations with other countries.

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RELIGIOUS PARTIES VOW TO STOP MIXED MARATHON

By Our Correspondent

DIFFERENT reactions were seen in the City over the mixed marathon, to be held on Jan 29. Religious parties, in particular, have pledged to stop the marathon by force. AHLE Haddith Youth Force (AHYF) Thursday announced that the mixed marathon would be stopped by force, and the government would not be allowed to conduct such programs in the future as well. AHYF leaders said the force had already chalked out its strategy to combat the occasion. They said their workers were not afraid of the arrests and the cases, and would give a tough time to the government. The further announced to conduct rallies on Friday in Lahore, Okara, Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Sialkot, Kasur and Sheikhpura.

JAMIAT-E-ULEMA PAKISTAN PROTEST AGAINST MIXED MARATHON

JAMIAT-E-Ulema Pakistan activists Thursday staged a protest demonstration against the mixed marathon and attack on Bajaur Agency outside the Lahore Press Club.

While addressing the gathering, Malik Bashir Ahmed Nizami, Maulana Abdul Rehman Noorani, Qari Manzoor Ahmed and Muhammad Usman Jamaati said they would not let the racers to pass from different roads of the provincial metropolis. They said by holding such race, the government was promoting western culture in the country and the JUP would not allow it.

WORLD PASBAN KHATME NABUWAT TO PROTEST TODAY

World Pasban Khatme Nabuwat will stage a protest against mixed marathon after Juma prayers in different places in the provincial metropolis.

This was stated by Nazim Aala Allama Muhammad Mumtaz Awan in a press statement issued Thursday.

TEHRIKE ISLAMI PAKISTAN FLAY MIXED MARATHON

Prof Hafeezur Rehman Ahsan, Naib Ameer Tehrike Islami Pakistan, Hakeem Abdul Waheed Salmani, Punjab Ameer, Nisar Ahmed Zahid, district ameer,

have strongly condemned the mixed marathon.

In a joint statement issued Thursday, they said there was no history of such marathons which taught people obscenity but the rulers were trying hard to promote western culture.

P.S.

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