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Marathon race

Arrested and released for running jointly

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Asma Jehaghir, the secretary Human Rights Commission of Pakistan had decided to organize a joint mini marathon race today on 14th May. It was in the background where the Musharaf regime has imposed a ban on joint marathon race on the pressure of the religious fundamentalists.

It was an act of defiance and Labour Party Pakistan has decided to support the event. We were hearing the news that the government have disallowed the race and would stop by force any attempt to organise it.

Today, the police in hundreds had encircled the offices of Asma Jehanghir and also the main venue the Qazafi stadium. Some 40 of us from LPP were able to reach the Qazafi stadium at 5pm exact in time as announced. As soon we arrived there, we were the only one there from the organizers and rest were few hundred policemen and women. There also over 100 plain cloth policemen.

We were immediately asked to leave the place by police. We resisted for the time being. But we were allowed to leave the place to go to the office of Asma Jenaghir in ones and twos. But there we started our marathon race. Some of us were able to reach the office only to find another hundreds of police force arresting the participants of the race.

I was immediately picked up by dozens of police men when resisted, I got minor injuries. 22 of us were brought to a police station. Police wanted to separate the men from women but refused and finally we were all in one room. 6 of them were from LPP, three women and three men.

After two hours, we were released without been charged.

We heard inside the police station that a handful of religious fundamentalists were also arrested near the place we were arrested. They had come to stop the marathon race by force as they had earlier announced.

We have decided to hold another joint marathon race to challenge the fascist tactics of the religious fundamentalist. It is our democratic right to run together and we will do so again. Today arrests have exposed the real nature of the so-called "moderate enlightnment" of Musharaf regime. It is pressurized by the religious fanatics who have become a force because of the patronage of the successive regimes of Pakistan.

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