

Youth's role as peace volunteers envisaged

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LAHORE: Punjab Education and Youth Affairs Minister Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan has called upon youngsters and students to become volunteers for peace and pledged that the government will encourage and acknowledge their abilities, role and work.

He said the government aimed to make youth an asset of the country. The minister was speaking at a news conference at the Lahore Press Club on Thursday, which was organised in collaboration with Bargad organisation for youth development and Umeed Jawan organisation, to announce day-long celebrations on the International Volunteer Day (IVD) to be held at PILAC, Qadhafi Stadium.

This year, he said, the IVD would be observed based on a theme "Peace and Youth" to create a counter-narrative against extremism. He said the Punjab government in collaboration with local and international organisations would also launch a programme for peace volunteers.

Mr Khan said the volunteers had a key role in the progress and development of a state and society. He said the Pakistani youth had tremendous potential that needed to be utilised for positive activities. He said there was a need to do a lot more with the help of youth to promote peace and tolerance in society.

"This is not only the joy of giving but you also gain identity, recognition, acknowledgement and respect, social capital and as a whole life skill through volunteerism," he remarked.

Bargad Executive Director Sabiha Shaheen said the IVD was being observed globally every year on Dec 5. She said Bargad had been observing this day for the past 12 years in collaboration with international and local partners and

the past 12 years in collaboration with international and local partners and with the support of the government at various levels.

She said Bargad Volunteer Network was spread across the country and it had tried to include and engage a maximum number of young people in constructive activities.

According to estimates, she said, Punjab at this moment was having 62pc population of youth (aging 15-29).

Umeed Jawan NGO Director Abdul Saboor also spoke.

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