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## World Literacy Day: PM Shehbaz Sharif calls education backbone of society

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Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif emphasised the vital role of education in empowerment, economic opportunities, and social participation during his message on World Literacy Day In Pakistan, literacy remains a major concern. As of 2024, the literacy rate is 59.13%, highlighting the country's ongoing challenges in enhancing education for all its citizens. International Literacy Day is being observed globally today, including in Pakistan, to highlight the significance of education for the millions of people worldwide who are illiterate. Celebrated each year on September 8 under the guidance of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the day focuses on the necessity for expanded literacy and educational opportunities. Prime Minister stated, "Literacy is a basic human and constitutional right, and education and literacy are the only ways through which Pakistan can progress." Marking the day,

PM Shehbaz reaffirmed the government's commitment to advancing the education agenda, aiming for a more informed and sustainable future for Pakistan. He highlighted "Education is the backbone of our society. For this purpose, we have declared an educational emergency across the country, launched an enrollment campaign for students, and initiated mid-day meals for children in schools." PM Shehbaz also stressed the importance of developing technological literacy, noting that the government is implementing a comprehensive plan to integrate technology into the education system to prepare the younger generation for success in the digital economy. A report by the Pak Alliance for Maths and Science (PAMS) had recently revealed that 25.3 million children aged 5 to 16 in Pakistan are out of school, representing 36% of the school-age population. The report, "The Missing Third of Pakistan," highlights that 74% of these children live in rural areas, with 51% of 5 to 9-year-olds never having enrolled. The data also shows a significant gender disparity, with 53% of out-of-school children being girls.