

Asi@Connect project will help bridge digital divide across Asia Pacific: EU envoy

The Newspaper's Staff Reporter | Updated July 09, 2019



ISLAMABAD: European Union (EU) Ambassador Jean-Francois Cautain on Monday said the launch of the Asi@Connect project in Pakistan would help bridge the digital divide across Asia Pacific and will cast a positive impact on efforts to strengthen connectivity for research and higher education in the region.

He was speaking at a ceremony during which the Higher Education Commission (HEC) launched Asi@Connect, a project that aims to develop a regional high capacity trans-Eurasia information network for research and higher education, in collaboration with the European Union and the Trans Eurasia Information Network Cooperation Centre.

The launch was also attended by Federal Education Parliamentary Secretary Wajiha Akram, HEC Chairman Dr Tariq Banuri, HEC Executive Director retired Lt Gen Mohammad Asghar and TEIN*CC President Yong Hwan Chung.

Mr Cautain said the EU followed certain principles to make strong connectivity between Asia and Europe productive and result-oriented.

“The principles cover sustainability, transparency, and equal access to all stakeholders,” he said.

According to the commission, the project provides dedicated high capacity internet connectivity for research and education communities across Asia-Pacific, operating at speeds of up to 10 Gbps, and currently connects universities and research centres in 23 countries.

It also connects 50 million European researchers and academics

served by the GÉANT network, the Pan European Data Network for R&E Community.

Pakistan's involvement in the collaboration will encompass work on high energy physics, internet access, e-culture, cyber performance, telemedicine, intelligent medical services, software defined network, open flow of OF@TEIN, Eduroam, Edugain and Computer Security Incident Response Team (CSIRT) development in Asia.

Ms Akram spoke about the significance and scope of the partnership with Asi@Connect and said she hoped that the HEC would keep playing its role in collaborative engagements with entities like TEIN*CC.

In his opening remarks, Dr Banuri said that the globally connected world has brought about great opportunities which could not be dreamt of in the past. Highlighting HEC's initiatives for improved connectivity, he said that HEC has invested highly in ICT and enhanced connectivity.

Mr Chung said the launch of Asi@Connect in Pakistan will help Pakistan's education community and researchers find new avenues and means to connect with researchers from across Asia and Europe.

“The advanced technologies and researches through the project will ultimately contribute to prosperity of the entire Asia Pacific and Europe,” he said.

Published in Dawn, July 9th, 2019