

## Narcissism at state expense

Glorification, image building and personal publicity - all at the tax payers' expense. The Federal and the Provincial governments make Pakistan poor every day by spending billion of Rupees on mindless self-projection. This is unethical and illegal. This money ought to be spent on the welfare of ordinary people. Pakistan can make a new hospital every week if the hundreds of narcissistic ads could be redirected towards development. Surely some lives could have been saved if there was a hospital in Sehwan.

Spending public funds for private publicity is not just unethical but also unlawful. The disease is hugely prevalent in countries where ethics, and accountability are never seriously questioned. Dr. AQ Khan is recognised for his role in the field of nuclear science, but few are aware of his pioneering contribution to the science of narcissism. Over 30 laboratories, schools, hospitals, play grounds and markets were named after him before he unceremoniously disappeared into oblivion. GIK Engineering University, Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi Institute of Cardiology Multan and Nawaz Sharif Kidney Hospital Swat are just a few examples of the misuse of tax-payers' money for personal glorification. The number of structures and schemes named after Benazir Bhutto would call for the services of a professional accountant.

Often these 'publicity-at-state-expense' projects become questionable and discreditable when the concerned individuals retire or fall from grace for any reason. Consider the flyover in the SITE area of Karachi, built by the Sindh Government at a cost of Rs. 547 million. Planned to be named as 'Habib Bank Flyover', the audience was left in a daze when the Sindh Governor re-baptised the bridge as Afza Altaf Flyover at its inaugural ceremony. The sole idea of naming the bridge after Altaf Hussain's daughter was to seek appeasement and show loyalty to someone who was well known to be seriously involved in militancy and anti-state activities.

The AA Flyover is a monument to political sycophancy and the silence of an enslaved 'civil society'. The bridge ought to be de-baptised and reverted to its originally planned name. Why are buildings, institutes and bridges named after those who never contributed a single penny of their own - and possibly siphoned many millions from the contracts and construction of these buildings. The self-aggrandising tradition of public structures and institutions being named after politicians or government servants, specially in their own life time and while they are still on active duty, must be formally brought to end - by an act of the Parliament.