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Shariah, Constitution shirkers aren't Pakistanis: COAS

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ISLAMABAD:

Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir on Thursday urged Ulema and Mashaikh (religious scholars) to promote tolerance and unity in society to fight extremism. Addressing the National Ulema Convention, the COAS said the Pakistan Army was working hard to eradicate strife from the nation, in keeping with divine commandments, as such discord is considered a grave sin against Allah. He said, "We do not consider those as Pakistanis, who do not follow Shariah and the

Constitution.” The religious scholars should bring back moderation in society and reject dissension, he added. The western civilization and way of life was not the nation’s ideal, it should be proud of its own civilization, he said and mentioned verses from Allama Dr Muhammad Iqbal’s poetry, highlighting that the Ummah stands apart from Western nations, as followers of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) are a special and distinguished community. The COAS noted that the Pakhtun brothers and the people of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa had rendered great sacrifices in the war against terrorism and the armed forces along with the nation stand with them appreciating their efforts. For more than 40 years, he said Pakistan has hosted millions of Afghan refugees, adding, “We are explaining to them not to oppose their neighbour, brotherly Islamic country and longtime friend for the sake of subversive Kharijite (referring to TTP).” He said that the Kharijites represented a great strife or fitnah in society as Allama Iqbal said: “Education may be a fitna if it leads you away from Allah Almighty. Likewise, property, children, and estates can become temptations or strife if they divert you from justice. He said, “We ask people to opt for peaceful protest for their demands.” Speaking about extremism, the COAS said, “Allah says that there is no compulsion in religion. Crime and smuggling mafias are supporting terrorism.” The anarchy was spread through social media, he added. The army chief said, “No one has the courage to desecrate the glory of the Holy Prophet (SAW). If someone tries to create anarchy in Pakistan, by God, we will stand against

him.” He underscored that no power in the world could harm Pakistan because this country was built to last. “Millions of Asim Munirs, millions of politicians and millions of scholars are sacrificed for Pakistan because the country is more important to us,” he said. “If you want to know the importance of the state, ask Iraq, Syria and Libya,” he added. He recalled that inimical elements used to claim that they had dumped the two-nation theory into the Bay of Bengal, and questioned rhetorically, “where are they today?” The army chief said, “Partition of Kashmir is an incomplete agenda of Indo-Pak. My heart cries out over the atrocities in Palestine and Gaza. We should draw a lesson from Palestine that we have to protect ourselves and make Pakistan strong.” In his address, the Chief of the Army Staff stated, “We stand united and resolute in our commitment to eradicate terrorism from our soil. We will not tolerate extremism, violence, or fear-mongering.” He condemned “twisted ideologies that seek to divide us, senseless killings that aim to intimidate us, and inhumane tactics employed by Fitna Al Khawarij (FAK) that attempt to break our spirit.” He emphasized, “Let us strive for a Pakistan where everyone can thrive in peace and prosperity. We are one nation, one people, and together we can achieve greatness.” He acknowledged the vital role of Ulema in promoting peace, tolerance, and inclusivity, countering extremist narratives, and educating society to reject hate and violence. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that the coalition government and the national institutions were in an unprecedented harmony

and cooperation to serve the better national interests and steer the country out of prevailing challenges. The prime minister, addressing the Ulema-Mashaikh Conference here, said that the country never needed unity and national harmony more, and he had never seen such a level of cooperation between a political government and the institutions throughout his political career.

Appreciating the support extended by Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir, also attending the moot, he said that such exemplary collaboration was a role model for the future. He said that the challenges pervading the country necessitated learning lessons from past weaknesses and mistakes and making sincere efforts to develop Pakistan as a country as was dreamt by the forefathers and sacrificed hundreds of thousands of lives during the Pakistan Movement. Prime Minister Shehbaz said the nation, which was about to celebrate its 77th Independence Day on August 14, was yet to find its destination, but the goal was achievable provided the dedicated efforts were made and the teachings of Quran and Sunnah were followed.

He called for the efforts to wipe out Fitna al Khawarij – a term referring to Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan – which he said was involved in anti-Pakistan activities despite claiming to be a Pakistani.

He also criticized the use of social media to spread lies and propaganda – particularly after 2018 – instead of appreciating the government’s efforts for public services. He said even the army soldiers, who sacrificed their lives to protect millions of other children from being orphaned, were

being humiliated on social media. Calling the May 9 attacks “the most heart-wrenching” incident in the country’s history, the prime minister highlighted that the characters behind the tragedy of 1971 met their fate in Bangladesh amidst the recent developments in the country. He urged Ulema to play their role to do away with the division in the society and highlight the Islamic economic system, and said that no force could obstruct the country’s development if the nation was determined to achieve its goal. Prime Minister Shehbaz told the gathering that the government was making all-out efforts to address the economic challenges and expected the upcoming IMF program to be the last one. At the same time, it had scraped Rs50 billion to support the power consumers of the protected category consuming up to 200 units. But the consumers using 200–500 units of electricity were still under the burden, he added. However, he assured the gathering that the coalition government and the COAS were in consultation to work out a comprehensive plan to ease the inflation-stricken people and the provinces would soon announce their respective plans in this regard. He said the IMF Program was a compulsion to bring economic about stability, productive employment and reforms in the FBR and power sector. The prime minister urged Ulema and Mashaikh to play an active role in countering propaganda, fake news, and disinformation, while aligning with core Islamic values and principles. He stressed the significance of the role of Ulema and Mashaikh in guiding youth towards understanding the

Quran, Sunnah, and character building, alongside academic knowledge and technical skills. He was speaking to a large gathering of esteemed Islamic scholars (Ulema o Mashaikh) from diverse schools of thought convened at the Pakistan-China Friendship Center here for the National Ulema Convention. The prime minister graced the occasion as the Chief Guest, while the Chief of the Army Staff, General Syed Asim Munir NI(M), was the Guest of Honor. In his address, the prime minister emphasized, “Islam is a religion of peace, and peace is the foundation of Islam. It teaches us coexistence, not confrontation. We must uphold these Islamic values firmly.” He further remarked, “Pakistan is a nation built on the principles of love, compassion, and acceptance. Our diversity, encompassing various cultures, religions, and ethnicities, is our strength. Let us embrace our differences and celebrate our unique identities.” He also paid tribute to the brave security forces and law enforcement agencies, saying, “We salute those who risk their lives daily to protect the nation, offering the highest sacrifice for the motherland. We honor the sacrifices of our martyrs, who have given their lives to defend the nation.” The forum unanimously expressed deep anguish over the ongoing brutalities against Kashmiris in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and the inhumane conflict in Gaza, terming these as crimes against humanity.