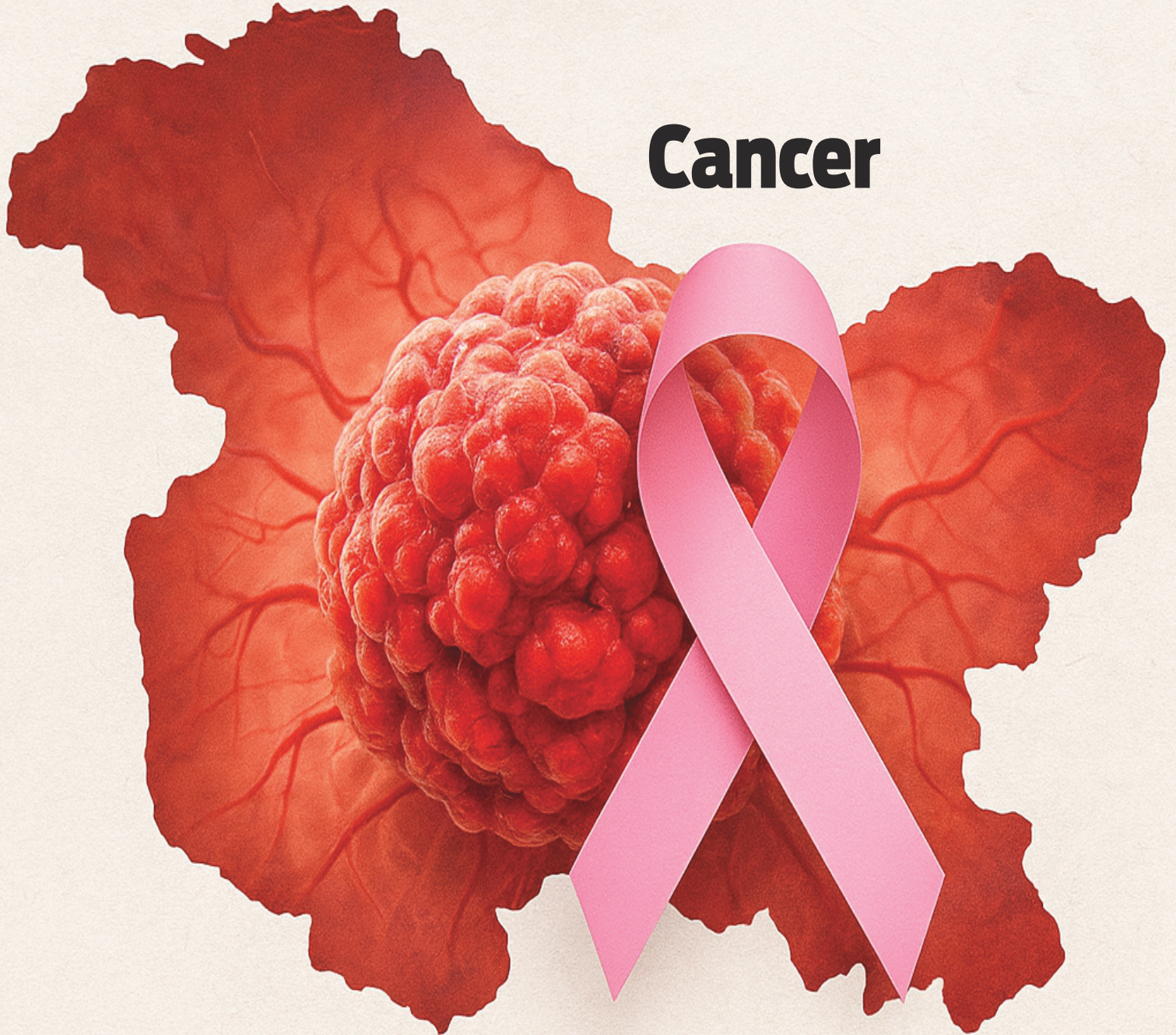




KASHMIR VIEWER

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Cancer



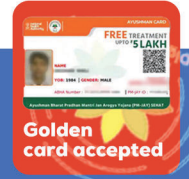
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From **Chief Editor's** Desk



Tourism, one of the most vital pillars of Kashmir's economy, sustains thousands of families across the valley. From hoteliers and shikara owners to guides and artisans, many people depend on this sector for their livelihood. However, in recent months, the tourism scene has changed dramatically. The places that once echoed with the laughter of tourists now paint a picture of silence.

Houseboats lie still, and many in the trade say they have rarely witnessed such a slowdown — largely because of the Pahalgam attack, which dealt a severe

blow to visitor confidence and disrupted the season's momentum.

The recently held Kashmir Marathon brought a brief wave of energy and optimism, as athletes and participants from various regions took to the streets. For a moment, it rekindled hope that normalcy and vibrancy could return. Yet, the question remains — can such isolated events bring back the steady stream of tourists the region depends on?

Experts and stakeholders believe that while events like the marathon are important to project positivity, they alone cannot revive the tourism economy. What Kashmir needs now are consistent efforts and strong promotional campaigns. Tourists need assurance of safety, comfort, and a welcoming atmosphere throughout the year — not just during festivals or events.

The government and people associated with the tourism sector must work hand in hand. Local entrepreneurs, hoteliers, and tour operators can play a crucial role in rebranding Kashmir as a year-round destination. Sustainable tourism, community involvement, and continuous engagement through media campaigns can make a lasting impact.

Kashmir's beauty never fades — it only awaits rediscovery. The silence that hangs over its tourist spots today must be replaced with the warmth of visitors once again. For that, symbolic events must be followed by sustained action — only then can Kashmir's tourism truly rise again.

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Showkat Shafi

Amin Kamil

The Unconventional Voice Who Shaped Modern Kashmiri Literature

A tribute to the poet, thinker, and reformer whose fearless originality transformed the contours of Kashmiri verse and thought.

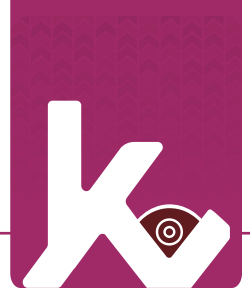


Emerson's famous words, 'whosoever is a great man is a non-conformist', fit so well with Amin Kamil, the prolific poet, fiction writer, literary critic, researcher and Editor. 11 years ago, this major voice

in Kashmir poetry and one of the chief exponents of modern Ghazal, whose contemporaries and later generations widely accepted his influence, passed away at the age of 90.

Being a public servant at University

one comes across a cross-section of intellectuals, writers, and academics whom you love to hear. I have heard Kamil at numerous literary events held at Kashmir University. One could not miss his genius and originality of



thought over issues of contemporary relevance. Sometimes people could disagree with him at the most, but never afford to ignore him or be indifferent to his utterances.

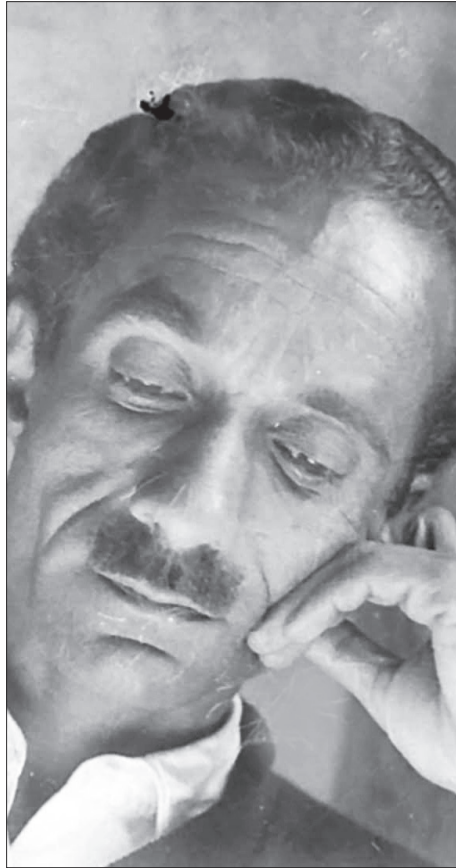
Background

“A thought-provoking intellectual who would challenge all the forms and styles in prose and poetry, and focused himself on Kashmir specific research”, is how Faruq Masudi, a writer, and filmmaker, describes his ‘unconventional’ way of ‘doing’. The road he treads on the landscape of Kashmiri language and literature was the one less traveled, Faruq said. And that for great literary genius Robert Frost “makes the difference”.

Born in Kapran Kulgam, a village in south Kashmir, on 3rd August 1924, Kamil moved to Srinagar at a very young age; graduated in Arts from the Punjab University and later took a degree in law from the AMU, Aligarh. In 1947, he joined the Bar and practiced law until Sri Pratap College, Srinagar appointed him as a lecturer in 1949. Amin Kamil remained closely associated with the writers’ movement of that era and under its influence switched over from Urdu to Kashmiri as his medium of expression. In 1958, the State Cultural Academy, when established, enlisted him as a member, and he assumed the role of the convener for Kashmiri. Kamil later became Editor for the Kashmiri section and edited the two journals of the Academy for many years. His notable works include Gati Manz Gaash (1958), Kathi Manz Kath (1966), Lava ta Prava (1965), Beyi Suy Paan (1967), Padis Pod Tshay (1972), Yim Myani Sokhan (2001

Down the memory lane:

Recalling Kamil’s days as editor Sheeraza, the poet critic and translator of Kashmir languages Muneeb-ur-



Rehman, one of his old blogs describes Kamil as “an editor par excellence”. “Kamil would value and respond to all forms of literature – new and old with equal interest and treatment. His unprejudiced outlook on all genres and styles culminated in the popularity of Shiraza among a cross-section of Kashmiri writers, recalls Muneeb. Kamil was instrumental in fashioning Kashmiri Ghazal into an entity distinct from its Urdu and Persian counterparts. Freshness of sensibility, maturity of expression, and striking technical innovation collectively characterize his poetry, granting him a uniquely distinctive diction.

*Ninder chi tosi katan wajnaen paemitch
kar taam*

*Yinder chu toti nachaan intizaar paghuk
kar*

Amin Kamil

Wheel spinners have long slept
But the wheel will continue to move on,
Wait for tomorrow.

Translition: Showkat Shafi

Kamil employs subtle humor and satire with devastating effect in his poetry. Through it, he mirrors contemporary life and makes a social comment on his milieu. His satire or humor, however, does not bruise but heals.

*“Yeti chu soroei fiza Karamaech hund,
Yeti chi prath mehkamus chalarwaan laash*

Amin Kamil

With us miracles are quite common,
everywhere the dead rule the living

Translated by Unknown

He has the quality of being simple as well as profound at the same time. This he does in purely Kashmiri tenor. Despite his great academic knowledge, he has never fallen prey to the transplantation of an alien metaphor, borrowing of a foreign concept or trend in literature. His use of language is exceptional in the literary history of Kashmir. Kamil’s contribution to the field of fiction adds to his stature. In 1958, Gati Manz Gaash (Light Amidst Darkness), a novel written in the context of the aftermath of the partition of the Indian sub-continent in 1947, won him acclaim. Kamil’s collection of short stories, Kathi Manz Kath (Story Within Story) published in the mid-60s includes his masterpiece, Kokar Jang (The Cockfight). The Cockfight is considered the most popular story in Kashmiri literature. It has been translated into many Indian languages and has appeared in anthologies such as Indian Short Stories Contemporary, Kashmiri Short Stories, and Contemporary Indian Short



Stories. It has also appeared in Best Loved Indian Stories of the Century, published by Penguin India in 1999. Kamil like many great writers the world over believed humor and satire as “effective weapons for social change”. His wonderful compilation *Asan Trayi* is a great example of satire and humor. Kamil also established himself as a creative prose writer and critic. His great contribution is the publication of *Kashmiri Sufi Poetry* (3 volumes) and revisiting the traditional *Habakatoon* and presenting a fresh and “vivid” picture of this great historical character.

Amin Kamil as editor

Apart from some anthologies he edited, Kamil has published two books of literary criticism *Jawaban Chu Arz* (In Reply, vol 1 & 2) and a book *Mehjoornen Bonen Tal* (Under the Chinars of Mehjoor) on the popular Kashmiri poet of the 1930s, Ghulam Ahmad Mehjoor.” Among a handful of employed and freelance editors that we had in the past 60 years or so, Amin Kamil stands out. One of the first and foremost editors, and an editor by both profession and passion, Kamil not only edited and published the very first collection of Kashmiri writings *Yavan Nahaj* in 1954 with Aziz Haroon but was also associated with two reputed early magazines *Gulrez* and *Kongposh*, and later on found an independent magazine *Neab* even as he was editing *Sheeraza* at his job in the Cultural Academy” Writes Muneebul Rehman , Editor *Naeb Magazine*
The Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages was established in 1958 by a government committee on which Amin Kamil served as a convenor. Among the members were Jialal Koul, Nandlal Kaul Talib, Brij Krishan Madan, Amin Kamil and G. R. Santosh. “So began Kamil his 15 year

Born	Muhammad Amin Nengroo 3 August 1924 Kaprin, Jammu and Kashmir
Died	30 October 2014 (aged 90) Jammu, Jammu and Kashmir, India
Occupation	Poet, fiction writer, literary critic, researcher, and editor
Citizenship	Kashmiri
Literary	Progressive Writers
Movement	Movement, Modernism
Notable works	<i>Gati Manz Gaash</i> (1958), <i>Kathi Manz Kath</i> (1966), <i>Lava ta Prava</i> (1965), <i>Beyi Suy Paan</i> (1967), <i>Padis Pod Tshay</i> (1972), <i>Yim Myani Sokhan</i> (2001)
Notable awards	<i>Sahitya Akademi Award</i> (1967), <i>Padma Shri</i> (2005)

long career as an editor at this institution; though adversely affected in some ways but completely unmoved by the politics, promise and temptations of its administrative positions.” Adds Muneebul Rehman During his tenure as an editor, he made *Sheeraza* and *Son Adab* true representatives of Kashmiri writing. Versatility being one of his distinctions among his contemporaries, Kamil had an edge over all other editors before and after him. He could value and respond to all the forms of literature, new and old, with equal interest and treatment. His unprejudicial outlook on all genres and styles culminated in popularity of *Sheeraza* among a cross-section of Kashmiri writers. The strong presence of *Sheeraza* and *Son Adab* did not leave much room for the emergence of any other magazine until Kamil himself boldly and independently brought out *Neab* which then opened the ground for other competitive and subsequent magazines, Opines Muneebul Rehman. Kamil edited nearly 100 issues of *Sheeraza* and more than a dozen issues of *Son Adab*. Here are some of the special issues of these magazines.

A great lover of the Kashmiri language Kamil’s dictum, “Kashri saeten Kashir

sairi” (Kashmiris are because of the Kashmiri language) remained close to his heart all his life. ‘Can we just be ourselves, pledge not to copy whether in thought or diction and reap the benefits of this rich language’, he was often quoted as saying.

*Naerow, Manzil Chi warah door paek,
Yemi chi sayri kochi bay gul nor paek*

Amin Kamil

let us move, the goal is yet too far,
All these lanes are devoid of flowers,
move on

Translated by Unknown

A Two-day national seminar at Aligarh Muslim University Aligarh held in early 2009 on “Critical Perspective on Kashmiri Poet Amin Kamil” looked at the genius of Kamil from many angles. In the seminar, Professor Gulshan Majeed, a noted writer, and critic revealed that Kamil’s use of words is oriented toward liberating us from the prison-house of systems, ideologies, and meta-narratives. Prof Majeed added that “Kamil employs metaphors and paradoxes intending to transcend the normal parameters of the communicability”



What others say about Amin Kamil

Besides his recognition at the national level, Kamil had little share as yet at the international level. Language for a New Century — Contemporary Poetry from the Middle East, Asia & Beyond, an anthology of Eastern poetry published by a renowned international publisher W.W. Norton & Co., for the first time included poems by many Kashmiri poets. The anthology included poems by Kashmiri poets Amin Kamil, Rehman Rahi, and Rafiq Raaz. Muneebur Rahman says ‘It’s for the first time that Kashmiri poets are featured in an international anthology,’ said Muneeb to a local English daily. “The anthology includes poems from about 60 nationalities, wildly divergent cultures and voices.” Translations of Amin Kamil’s Ghazals, Dew, and Water which appeared in the anthology were also part

of an international workshop held in Chicago, sponsored by the University of Chicago. Poet and editor Ravi Shankar of Central Connecticut State University also conducted a discussion of works by Korean poet Ko Un, Chinese poet Bei Dao, Japanese poet Tada Chimako, and Kashmiri poet Amin Kamil among four other poets from the Middle East. Kamil has won awards from the Jammu & Kashmir Cultural Academy, the State Government of Jammu & Kashmir, Robes of Honor from many prestigious organisations, Sahitya Akademi Award (1967) International Irfan Foundation Award, Kashmir University’s Lifetime Achievement Award, and Padma Shri in the year 2005 (Literature & Education) . Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages published a special issue of its literary magazine Sheeraza on Amin Kamil’s life and

works which was released in Srinagar in Summer 2011.

“A writer exists on three planes—the plane of relationships, the plane of social ties, and the plane of individuality, and he or she can’t do away with any of these”. Kamil was quoted as saying by a local English daily 7 years back. And this is all true about Kamil himself. Poetry for Kamil is the art of giving meaning and metaphoric value to words and situations. “I can say that literature is an indirect art”, he had said. Kamil has no doubt the poet, thinker, and reformer whose fearless originality transformed the contours of Kashmiri verse and thought.

Author ,a former faculty at MERC Kashmir University is a free lance media professional, blogger and literary critic. Email : showkeshafi@gmail.com



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Kashmir's Dying Veins: The Silent Scream of Our Water Bodies

There was a time when Kashmir was known not only for its majestic mountains and meadows but also for its crystal-clear waters. The sound of gushing streams and the gentle murmur of springs were as much a part of our identity as the chinars and snow peaks. Villagers filled their copper vessels directly from the running brooks; travelers paused by roadside springs to drink nature's purest gift. The very rhythm of life was tuned to the melody of water.

But today, that music has turned into a dirge. The same waters that once mirrored the sky now reflect our neglect, greed, and indifference. From Dal to Wular, from Verinag to Shalimar's forgotten canals, the story is one of decline. Our lakes and rivers are suffocating under filth; our springs and streams, once the purest source of drinking water, have become stagnant swamps.

From Purity to Pollution

Walk through any village in the Valley and you will find what once was a bubbling stream now reduced to a dark, foul-smelling channel. Polythene bags, plastic bottles, food waste, even diapers — all lie floating in what used to be the pride of our landscape. These are not isolated instances; they are scenes repeated across Kashmir, from Kupwara to Qazigund.

The tragedy lies not just in pollution but in our complete moral collapse as caretakers of nature. The water bodies that sustained us for centuries have been turned into open drains by our own



hands. Springs that once quenched the thirst of generations are now breeding grounds for mosquitoes. This is not merely environmental degradation; it is the slow poisoning of our collective heritage.

Encroachment — The Slow Strangulation

If pollution has dirtied our waters, encroachment has strangled them. The banks of the Jhelum, once broad and

breathing, are now hemmed in by illegal constructions. Houses, shops, and roads have crept closer and closer, shrinking the river's natural space. Wetlands that acted as sponges during heavy rains have been filled up to make way for housing colonies and commercial complexes.

Every wall raised on a riverbank is a nail in the coffin of Kashmir's ecological balance. The Jhelum and its tributaries have lost their natural flow; the carrying capacity of rivers has been drastically



reduced. This man-made suffocation has not gone unanswered. The 2014 floods were a grim reminder of what happens when nature's arteries are blocked. But have we learned any lessons since then? Sadly, the same pattern continues — rivers choked, wetlands filled, and encroachments left unchecked.

The Drainage Disaster

Adding to this chaos is the absence of proper sewage and drainage treatment. In both urban and rural areas, wastewater from kitchens, bathrooms, and laundries flows directly into nearby streams and rivers. Villagers wash clothes and utensils beside the same stream they draw drinking water from. In cities, open drains carrying household waste and industrial effluents merge with rivers without filtration.

This daily contamination has turned our once-living waters into carriers of disease. The irony is cruel: the water that once gave us life is now threatening our health. Poor infrastructure, lack of planning, and public indifference together form a toxic combination that continues to defile Kashmir's most precious resource.

Garbage and the Culture of Carelessness

Plastic, that modern curse, has become a permanent resident of our water bodies. Despite bans and awareness drives, polythene and plastic waste continue to find their way into streams, rivers, and lakes. The sight of floating garbage in Dal or Wular has almost become normal — a frightening sign of how accustomed we have grown to environmental degradation.

Municipal agencies conduct occasional cleanliness drives, but these are often symbolic — photo opportunities rather than solutions. The real problem lies in

our collective mindset. We have learned to live with filth. Until we, as citizens, feel personal responsibility for our environment, no government machinery can undo the damage.

Floods: Nature's Fury or Man's Folly?

Kashmir's frequent floods are not random acts of nature. They are warnings — nature's desperate attempts to reclaim its lost space. When rivers lose their floodplains, when wetlands vanish under concrete, and when drainage channels are blocked, water finds its own violent way. The destruction that follows is called a "natural disaster," but in truth, it is a man-made calamity.

The 2014 deluge was described as a once-in-a-century event, but similar threats now loom every monsoon. The imbalance we have created by suffocating our water bodies is returning to haunt us. Nature's wrath is, in fact, a mirror held up to our collective arrogance.

The Vanishing Springs and the Thirst Ahead

Beyond the visible pollution and encroachment lies another quiet crisis — the depletion of water itself. Kashmir's once-abundant springs are drying up. Groundwater levels are falling. Changing rainfall patterns, deforestation, and unregulated construction have all contributed to this decline.

Villages that once depended on natural springs now wait for tanker supplies. Streams that once flowed year-round are dry for months. The tragedy of Kashmir's water crisis is that it is not caused by scarcity of natural endowment but by the abundance of human neglect.

The Way Forward

Restoring Kashmir's water bodies is

not an impossible dream. Nature is forgiving if treated with care. What we need is a clear and collective action plan. Encroachments must be removed with sincerity, not selectively. Wastewater treatment plants should be established in every town and large village. Drainage and sewage networks must be redesigned to prevent contamination of natural water sources.

Public participation is the key. Environmental education should begin in schools. Religious and community leaders can play a powerful role by framing water conservation as a moral and spiritual duty. Media and civil society must keep up the pressure through continuous advocacy, not just seasonal campaigns.

Individuals, too, must change their habits — stop littering, stop using polythene, stop dumping waste near water bodies. Protecting a stream or spring in one's locality is as sacred a task as preserving a shrine. After all, what is purity of faith without purity of water?

A Final Warning

The truth is harsh but simple: if we do not care for our water bodies, one day they will cease to care for us. Rivers and lakes may not speak, but their silence is deafening. Each clogged drain, each polluted stream, each encroached wetland is a warning — a reminder that nature's patience is not endless.

Water is not merely a resource; it is the pulse of life, the soul of Kashmir's beauty, and the foundation of its survival. To save our water is to save ourselves. The question is: will we wake up before it is too late?

Muhammad Ayub Khan, known by his pen name Ayub Dilber, is a retired English lecturer. He writes poetry, short stories, and essays, and is the President of the Cultural Trust Kupwara

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The Changing Dynamics of the Doctor–Patient Relationship



A relationship is built on trust and mutual respect, where both individuals understand and support each other. It is not about perfection but about a shared commitment to nurture the bond through good and difficult times. The same applies to the doctor–patient relationship, which has gradually weakened over time, leading to mutual dissatisfaction and loss of trust.

The unfortunate behavior of some patients towards doctors — ranging from verbal abuse and threats to

physical assault — creates a high-stress environment, leading to burnout and lasting psychological trauma. A 2015 study by the Indian Medical Association found that over 75% of doctors in India have faced some form of workplace violence. Emergency departments and psychiatric units remain high-risk areas.

Patient aggression is a complex issue driven by multiple factors — including the patient's condition, external stressors, and systemic flaws within the healthcare system. Pain, fear, long

waiting times, high costs, and poor communication often fuel frustration. Moreover, sensationalized media reports and unrealistic expectations foster the belief that doctors can cure every illness. When outcomes are poor, patients or their families may lash out in anger.

At times, political interference and mob mentality aggravate these situations, causing fear, frustration, and even depression among medical professionals. Such stress can lead to burnout, post-traumatic stress



disorder, and an increased risk of suicide. To protect themselves, some doctors resort to defensive medicine or avoid challenging cases, ultimately compromising the quality of care.

A weak doctor–patient relationship directly affects patient safety. Many healthcare workers do not report abuse due to unclear protocols or the belief that it is simply “part of the job.” Declining communication skills have also made patients feel unheard or disrespected. Excessive use of medical jargon instead of simple language further widens this gap.

Historically, the doctor–patient relationship has evolved with societal changes and medical advancements. Four decades ago, it followed a paternalistic model — doctors made decisions while patients complied, guided by trust and faith. Limited medical awareness and access to information reinforced this hierarchy.

Today, patients have unprecedented access to health information through the internet, making them more informed and proactive. The relationship has shifted from a paternalistic model to a collaborative partnership, emphasizing shared decision-making and mutual respect. Electronic health records and online health resources have empowered patients, though misinformation online often creates confusion and self-misdiagnosis — a “double-edged sword.” Doctors now spend additional time correcting such misconceptions but, when managed well, it improves trust and adherence.

Systemic and technological changes have further strained this bond. Heavy workloads, time constraints, and institutional pressure prevent doctors from addressing all patient concerns. Fear of litigation has encouraged defensive medical practices, increasing



costs and eroding trust. Overburdened healthcare systems and poor infrastructure worsen the problem, causing stress for both doctors and patients.

Ways to Improve the Doctor–Patient Relationship

Improving the doctor–patient relationship requires effort and understanding from both sides. Doctors must uphold high moral and ethical standards, treating every patient with honesty and accountability. Empathy plays a vital role — listening carefully to a patient’s words, tone, and emotions helps doctors understand not only the illness but also the person behind it. Genuine empathy can ease fear, reduce anxiety, and build a foundation of trust that often speeds up recovery.

Effective communication is equally essential. Doctors should use clear and simple language rather than medical jargon that confuses or intimidates patients. Explaining the diagnosis, treatment options, and associated costs transparently fosters confidence and cooperation. Along with communication comes reliability — being consistent, dependable, and respectful assures patients that their doctor truly cares about their well-being.

Another important aspect is respecting patient autonomy. Patients today are more informed and want to be part of the decision-making process. Involving them in discussions about treatment plans and respecting their choices strengthens mutual respect and understanding. Doctors should also remain sensitive to the cultural, social, and emotional backgrounds of their patients, tailoring communication to their level of awareness and comfort.

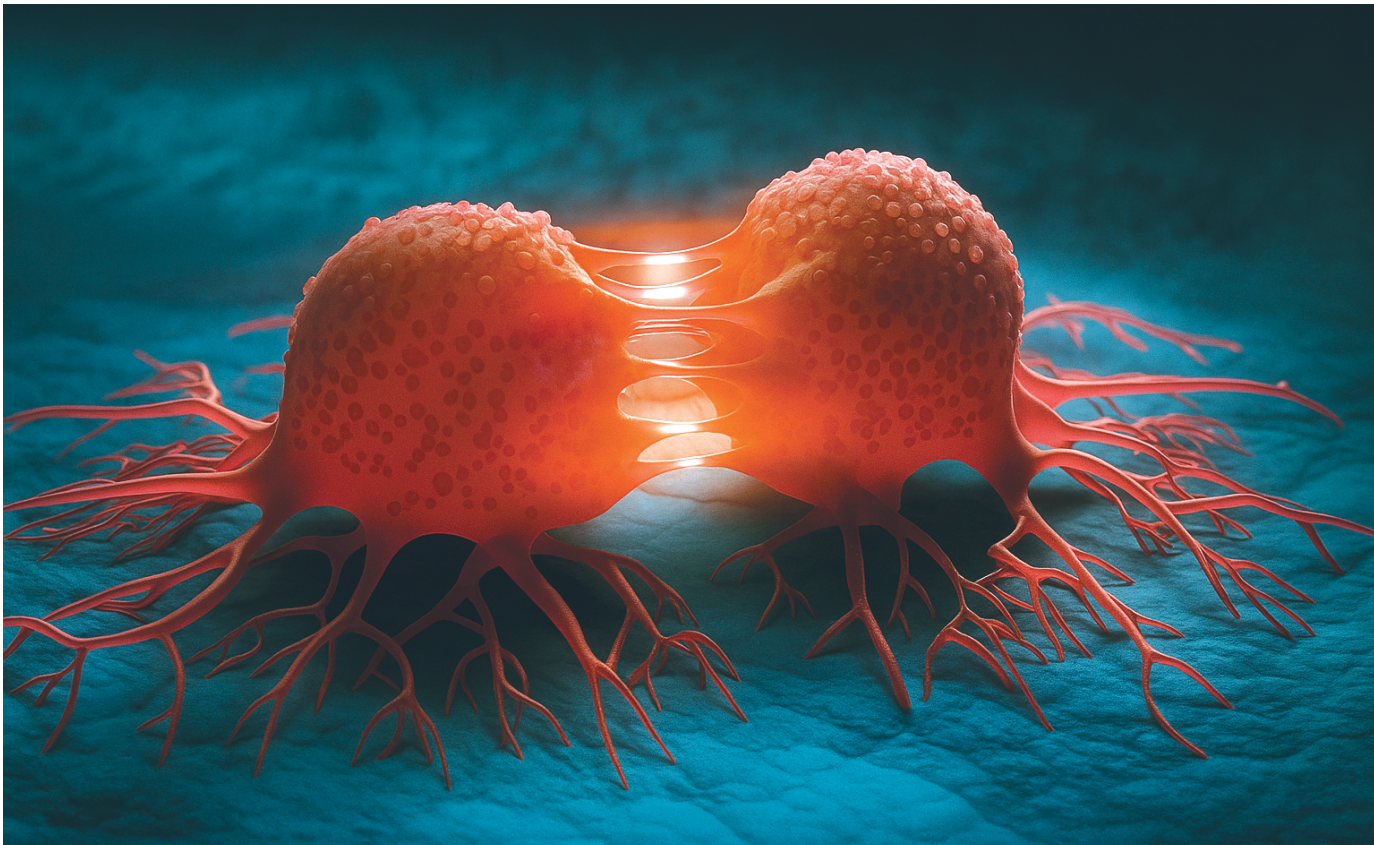
Conflicts and misunderstandings are inevitable in healthcare, but how they are handled defines the relationship. Addressing disagreements calmly, offering explanations rather than excuses, and being willing to say “sorry” when appropriate can go a long way in restoring faith. An apology does not imply guilt — it simply acknowledges the patient’s feelings and values the relationship over ego.

Lastly, gratitude should flow both ways. Patients must appreciate the dedication and effort that doctors invest, often under challenging conditions. Even a small gesture of thanks can make doctors feel valued and motivated. When both sides act with empathy, honesty, and mutual respect, the doctor–patient relationship can once again become a partnership built on trust, understanding, and care.



Yawar Hussain

Cancer: Kashmir's Silent Crisis



As Kashmir society witnesses unprecedented rise in Cancer cases, the government continues to hibernate amid alarm bells around the lack of infrastructure, shortage of professionals, and the non-existent testing facilities for foods and medicines, reports **Yawar Hussain**.

Srinagar: Mukhtar Ahmad (name changed), a retired government employee, sits melancholic in his two-storied house, overlooking

the Jhelum River in Pampore, as his relatives and friends come to show solidarity since he was diagnosed with rectal cancer three months back. His loss of surroundings doesn't stem from his disease but from the history that he lost his wife Rubeena to the same disease two years back. He remembers picnicking with his wife and two daughters in the saffron fields during the harvesting season. "After Rubeena passed away, I used to go to these Saffron fields with my two daughters and son-in-law to remember yesteryears. But now

I think I won't make it to the next harvesting season," Ahmad said. He said that his wife's stomach cancer was detected in the third stage, leaving him devastated but hopeful.

"I believed we could save her, but as time progressed, my hopes gradually shattered. I felt helpless as her eyes spoke to me that she was losing the fight."

While losing the "closet" one was irreparable for Ahmad, he also had to endure a huge financial toll.



He said that he spent close to ten lakh rupees on his wife's treatment, but then couldn't afford to take her to better health facilities outside, which are renowned for cancer treatment.

"Life is up to God, but I still have that itch that I couldn't take her outside. I think maybe she could have been saved, but alas, I didn't have the resources as I was the only earning hand," he said.

He said that following the treatment costs for his wife, he had to get one of his daughters married, leading to a further financial burden on his family.

He said that with his disease now being detected, he is lost, as he doesn't know where the money would come from.

"The government facilities aren't readily available. There is a huge rush of cancer patients. I have to go to a Srinagar-based private facility, which is very expensive," Ahmad said.

He divulges that for close to four months, he was losing blood but didn't tell his 24-year-old younger daughter about it.

"I lost weight, and I also started to look frail. I used to get IV (Intravenous) fluids administered through a local quack," Ahmad said, adding that he didn't want to incur more financial burden on himself.

It was only after he was found unconscious by his younger daughter that his sister and extended family made him see a doctor, leading to the diagnosis of cancer in his rectum. Ahmad's younger daughter, Madiha (name changed), said that she was hoping against hope that her father would be fine, but deep down, the fear from her mother's days lurked in her thoughts.

"My elder sister and I used to tell each other that he (their father) is

The majority of rural hospitals in the Valley lack even radiotherapy facilities, which then leads to an added burden on the tertiary care hospitals in Srinagar.

going to be fine, but somewhere we both knew that we were just trying not to address the elephant in the room," Madiha said.

She said that they both wanted to take their father outside to Tata Memorial Hospital in Mumbai, where their mother couldn't go, but the huge financial prospect related to it has devastated their hopes again.

"The government claims there are good facilities here in the Valley, but it is so difficult to get the basic PET (Positron Emission Tomography) scan done in a government facility," Madiha said.

Poor Govt Facilities

With cancer cases on the uptick in the Valley, coupled with high costs in private facilities, the whole of Kashmir Valley has just one PET scan machine — located at the Regional Cancer Centre of Sher-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Soura. The PET scan machine is vital for staging, diagnosis, and monitoring of the disease.

The Valley's other crucial health facility, Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar, has one PET scan machine installed but not made operational yet. The lack of a PET scan machine means a longer waiting period and delayed diagnoses of the disease, in which time is crucial.

Comparatively, the Jammu division is slightly better placed, though not adequate, in terms of cancer facilities than Kashmir. A state-of-the-art State Cancer Institute at Government Medical College, Jammu is being built with 100 beds, three operation theatres and an Intensive Care Unit. While SKIMS also has a similar institute, the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Jammu has also started a chemotherapy facility with specialists hired for the job.

Also, the American Oncology Institute (AOI) operates a full-fledged cancer hospital at a private health facility in Jammu.

While the lack of infrastructure facilities in the Valley has been a major impediment in fighting cancers, the Cancer Treatment and Management Fund for the Poor (CTMFFP)—financial assistance for cancer treatment for families with income below Rs 20000 per



month—has also been dwindling since last year.

A government doctor, wishing anonymity, said that since the last financial year, the patients have been complaining of delays in assistance under the scheme.

“The majority of patients seeking treatment for cancers fall under the eligibility criteria of the scheme, and they really need money. But the government seems deaf,” the doctor said.

Lawmaker from Kulgam assembly segment Muhammad Yusuf Tarigami, who had raised the issue, said that it was strange that, abruptly, the CTMFFP funds were halted and still the issue lingers on.

“For many of the poor, the CTMFFP is a lifeline. Since July 2024, this lifeline has been halted. I had appealed to the chief minister

for early clearance of pending cases, but complaints are still coming,” Tarigami said.

The inadequate cancer facilities often force patients towards greener health pastures, but at an added financial and emotional cost.

A cancer patient from north Kashmir’s Kupwara district said that he had to wait for over a month for his PET scan, leading to his children taking him to Delhi.

“They forced me because they said that when a PET scan is this much delayed, what treatment would they further administer to you?” the patient said, adding that he, however, had to go without his wailing wife because of the associated financial costs it would have incurred.

The Oncology department of Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar and the newly

established GMCs in Baramulla and Anantnag have a serious shortage of manpower, coupled with a lack of infrastructure.

The majority of rural hospitals in the Valley lack even radiotherapy facilities, which then leads to an added burden on the tertiary care hospitals in Srinagar.

From the north and south regions of the Kashmir valley, the calls for the setting up of Regional Cancer Centres (RCC) have been voiced vociferously.

The GMC Anantnag and GMC Baramulla cater to more than half the population of the Valley and even beyond to the regions of the Chenab valley of Jammu division.

Health Minister Sakeena Itoo recently announced that Rs 124.83 crore has been allocated for major upgrades in J&K’s healthcare



infrastructure. The plan includes a PET-CT at GMC Srinagar, MRI machines at GMC Baramulla, Kathua, and Rajouri, a Cath Lab at GMC Doda, and enhanced telemedicine facilities across 80 units. Dr Gazanfar Ali, a physician, said that the lack of cancer facilities in Kashmir can be gauged from the fact that PET technology, which is indispensable in modern oncology, is so severely limited in Kashmir.

“SKIMS is overburdened with its single PET scan machine. It caters to thousands of patients. This leads to longer waiting time, which in the case of cancer is very detrimental,” Dr Ali said.

He said a PET scan plays the most important role in the initial diagnosis, treatment planning, prognosis, and follow-up of cancer patients.

Alarming Figures

As per official data, Jammu and Kashmir recorded over 64,000 cases since 2018, with the Kashmir Valley alone accounting for more than 50,000, nearly four times the number in Jammu. Last year alone, over 7,000 new cases were registered. Data from the Union Health Ministry reveals that 51,577 new cancer cases were reported in Jammu & Kashmir between 2019 and 2022. In the same period, 35,623 people lost their lives to the disease.

Since 2013, SKIMS Soura has recorded around 50,000 new cancer cases, while GMC Srinagar has registered around 8,000 since 2017. The SKIMS reported over 28,457 cancer cases from 2019 to 2024. Annual case numbers include 4,337 in 2019, 3,814 in 2020, 4,727 in 2021, 5,271 in 2022, 5,108 in 2023, and over 5,200 in 2024.

In 2012, the SKIMS study identified “dietary practices and high salt consumption” as the main reasons behind the rising cancers of the stomach and oesophagus in the Valley.

Specialists opine that dietary habits, lifestyle changes, genetic predispositions, and delayed diagnoses, owing to a lack of medical infrastructure, are among the major reasons behind the uptick.

Dr Gazanfar Ali said the most prevalent cancers in Kashmir are gastrointestinal (GI) cancer, breast cancer, lung cancer and colon cancer. He said that more oily and salty foods are the main reasons behind the gastric and abdominal-related cancers in the Valley, while the quality of spices and condiments is completely unchecked.

He said the recent controversy around the quality of meat and poultry consumed in the Valley is in itself an answer to why there is an increase in cancer cases.

“The most sub-standard medicines normally reach the Valley. Similarly, the foods and other eatables are of the lowest quality,” he said.

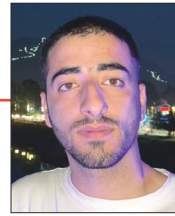
Dr Mohsin Bashir said that while there are lifestyle-related reasons behind the rising cancer cases, the government’s failure to set up monitoring and testing centres for the quality of foods, meat, poultry and spices, along with vegetables, is a more pressing issue.

“There is no filter. Common people can’t filter what is filthy and what is alright to eat. Even if one stops to eat outside, what about the spices, medicines and meat one brings home,” Dr Bashir said.

He said urbanisation has brought in a sedentary lifestyle, which has led

to obesity and hypertension. “These problems have led to higher infertility rates in women in Kashmir and also led to a rise in breast cancers. Late marriages, due to the rising cost of marriages, also lead to breast cancer.” Dr Gazanfar Ali said that there has also been a huge surge in lung and colon cancers in the Valley. “While lung cancer is mostly the product of active smoking, passive smokers are also around 40 per cent of the cases. Colon cancer rates have increased. Lifestyle and dietary habits contribute to it as well.”

With cancer cases on the uptick in the Valley, coupled with high costs in private facilities, the whole of Kashmir Valley has just one PET scan machine – located at the Regional Cancer Centre of Sher-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Soura.



Jahangeer Jamal



The Tale of Two Worlds – Srinagar and Beyond

Srinagar — a city where I have spent the past few years, though mostly confined to a house and a routine route across a bridge, two narrow alleys, and a lesser-known but heavily trafficked four-metre tunnel. In between this mindless commute, I occasionally travel to my hometown, Kupwara.

A few days ago, I decided to take a mindful walk — eyes open this time. Suddenly, I realised how much the city had changed. I had been blind to the

developments unfolding around me.

The city has transformed into a smart one: glowing streetlights that turn tricolour, broad footpaths alongside cycling lanes paved with polished tiles, and public bicycles you can unlock with your smartphone.

Lal Chowk has had a complete makeover. Giant digital billboards screen movies and live cricket matches. The new clock tower has become a selfie point. Walking further along the lush green Pratap

Park and the new memorial, and onto Residency Road, I reached Polo View Market. It left me awestruck. What a beauty, I thought. The place has been entirely renovated — clean tiled floors, comfortable benches surrounded by flower vases, and a Chinar tree glowing softly at the centre. A live concert was in progress, and people made merry under the lights.

By the time I left, evening had set in. I followed the faint notes of guitar strings and the voices of young boys singing



from Zero Bridge. At first glance, the scene looked like something straight out of a mobile wallpaper. The Jhelum below reflected and danced along, carrying the joy forward.

Walking back, I felt something missing overhead. My curious skyward glances caught the attention of a passer-by, who wondered what I was looking for. Then it struck me — the jumbled wires that once hung over wooden poles were gone. I was told they've gone underground now.

After visiting a few more places and witnessing more signs of development, I booked a cab to my room through Uber. It arrived in less than a minute. Meanwhile, I ordered my favourite chicken fried rice from Swiggy. As I stepped out of the cab, the food delivery was already waiting at my door.

I took the parcel, turned on the lights, and sat down for dinner. Just then, the water tank

began to overflow — a small inconvenience that demanded I get up and turn it off. After finishing my meal, I slipped under a blanket with some short stories of Franz Kafka and plugged in the electric blower. The warmth spread across the room. I was happy and content, and so was my city. The weekend set in, and I decided to visit my hometown — just about sixty miles away. In the evening, as our taxi began to leave the city, my contentment and happiness slowly gave way to darkness. The complete absence of streetlights along the road was striking.

At times, the glare of heavy trucks and SUVs blinded us, their sharp headlights slicing through the night. It felt like waking from a beautiful dream — into the dark of reality. The dull, broken music playing inside the taxi was nothing like those soothing guitar notes by the Jhelum.

I reached home around dinner time,



where the meal was being set under candlelight — not out of some cinematic inspiration, but necessity. There was no electricity, and the inverter had long died. No electric blower after dinner, and with my phone battery fading fast, I walked to my bedroom — disappointed and cold.

Brushing off the disappointment, I woke up in the morning and decided to take a warm bath, but to my surprise, there was no water. The supply pipeline had been crying for repair for months. I washed my face in the small stream flowing along the wall of my home — a stream littered with all kinds of domestic waste due to the absence of a proper waste disposal system.

The routine of people here is very different. They start their day anxious about water, making arrangements for light and warmth in the cold autumn. The day follows a natural rhythm — it

ends with the sunset. There is no Polo View-like concert, no Zero Bridge guitar evenings, and no resting places like Pratap Park. Forget the happiness they wish for comfortable survival.

The weekend is over, and I am in a dilemma — I feel guilty leaving this place and its people struggling for the basics, yet my heart craves the cheerful, joy-filled life that awaits me.

Why can't both places be the same? I think it would be better to illuminate the whole house rather than putting all the lights in

one room. There is an urgent need to turn the torch towards the periphery. Let the city grow smarter along with its surroundings — that will make the whole region truly shine.

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Advocate Umer Mir

Understanding Traffic Laws

The laws governing motor vehicles and road traffic regulation in India are primarily contained in the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988. This comprehensive legislation aims to ensure the systematic regulation of road traffic, promote road safety, maintain public order on roads, and provide mechanisms for compensation in the event of accidents.

Over the years, the Act has undergone several amendments to address emerging transportation challenges, technological developments, and the growing volume of vehicles on Indian roads.

A fundamental requirement for driving any motor vehicle under Indian law is the possession of a valid driving license. No person may drive or operate a motor vehicle without holding a license issued by a competent authority following due process under the Act and the rules framed thereunder. Any individual found driving without a valid license is liable to imprisonment for up to three months or a fine of ₹5,000, or both.

The minimum age to obtain a driving license for a motor vehicle is 18 years. However, individuals who are 16 years or older may obtain a license to drive a motorcycle with an engine capacity not exceeding 50cc. The minimum age limit for driving a transport vehicle—such as buses, trucks, and taxis—is 20 years.

Before receiving a permanent driving license, an applicant must first obtain a learner's license, which remains valid for six months from the date of

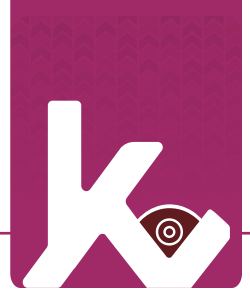


issuance. Ordinarily, an applicant must hold a valid light motor vehicle license for at least one year before applying for certain categories of licenses.

The Licensing Authority wields the power to suspend, revoke, or cancel a driving license if the license holder is found guilty of contravening provisions

of the Motor Vehicles Act or the rules made thereunder. Similarly, a judicial court may, through a written order, disqualify an individual from holding or obtaining a driving license if that person is convicted of an offence under the Act.

In addition, the Act places a similar



requirement on those employed as conductors on stage carriages—motor vehicles used for carrying more than six passengers (excluding the driver) for hire at separate fares. No person may be employed as a conductor unless he possesses a valid conductor's license. The



legal provisions governing suspension, cancellation, and disqualification of conductor's licenses correspond closely to those applicable to driving licenses. Every motor vehicle must be registered before it can be lawfully driven in any

public place. Driving or allowing any vehicle to be driven without registration is a punishable offence. Registration serves as proof of ownership and ensures that all vehicles meet the safety and environmental standards prescribed by law.

Furthermore, no motor vehicle may be used as a transport vehicle unless a valid permit has been issued by the competent Transport Authority. These permits are classified into several types, including:

Stage carriage permit – for vehicles carrying passengers for hire at separate fares on fixed routes or stages.

Goods carriage permit – for vehicles engaged in the transport of goods.

Contract carriage permit – for vehicles hired for specific journeys under contract.

Private service vehicle permit – for vehicles used by institutions or organizations for employee transport.

All permits are subject to specific conditions, validity periods, and renewal requirements. They may also be suspended, revoked, or cancelled for violations of the Act or any conditions attached to the permit.

The Act mandates strict compliance with traffic signals, rules, and signage. Drivers must observe prescribed speed limits, follow lane discipline, and refrain from leaving their vehicles in positions that may endanger other road users. If a vehicle is found abandoned or left unattended for more than ten hours in a place not designated for parking, the local police having jurisdiction may remove or tow away the vehicle.

For two-wheelers, carrying more than one pillion rider is prohibited. Both the rider and pillion must wear appropriate protective headgear. Notably, all persons above the age of four years riding on a two-wheeler must wear a helmet, as this

is an essential safety measure aimed at reducing head injuries in accidents.

Drivers are legally bound to produce their driving license when demanded by an authorized police officer in uniform. In cases where the license has been seized, the holder may present the official receipt issued upon seizure, which serves as a valid substitute document. Similarly, the driver or owner of a motor vehicle, particularly a transport vehicle, must produce the insurance certificate, vehicle fitness certificate, and permit whenever required by the police or transport authorities. If these documents are not immediately available, they may be produced within fifteen days of such demand.

A driver must also stop the vehicle when ordered to do so by a police officer not below the rank of Sub-Inspector—who is in uniform. This obligation becomes especially important when the vehicle is involved in an accident causing injury, death, or damage to property.

Traffic laws serve as the backbone of an orderly and safe road transport system. Compliance with the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, is not only a legal duty but also a civic responsibility that protects lives, property, and public infrastructure. Every driver, conductor, and vehicle owner must understand their rights, duties, and liabilities under the law. An aware citizenry and a responsible driving culture are essential to reducing accidents, ensuring road discipline, and building a safer and more efficient transport network in India.

Mir Umar, hailing from Kupwara, is a practising advocate in the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, Srinagar, and all subordinate courts of J&K.



Hilal Ahmad Tantry

Reviving the Pulpit: The True Meaning of the Islamic Sermon

The Sermon (Khutbah) holds a central place in Islam, serving as a means of guidance, education, and spiritual revival. It is a key instrument of Da'wah — calling people toward truth and moral awareness. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ used the sermon as a platform to inform, train, and awaken the community, especially during crucial moments when people needed direction and clarity.

The Prophet's sermons were always rooted in reality. Whether during times of war, prayer, pilgrimage, or even informal gatherings, he addressed people's immediate concerns with the Qur'an and Hikmah (wisdom). His words were short, direct, and full of meaning — never long or disconnected. Because of this clarity and relevance, the people would listen with eagerness and leave spiritually uplifted.

Jabir bin Samurah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ used to deliver two sermons on Friday, sit briefly between them, and both his sermon and prayer were of moderate length. Another narration mentions that when he spoke, his eyes would turn red and his voice rise, as if warning people of an approaching danger (Muslim). These narrations show how deeply sincere and relevant the Prophet's sermons were — filled with urgency, compassion, and purpose.

The Current Reality

Sadly, today's Khutbahs often fail to reflect that prophetic essence. Many

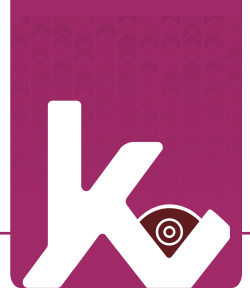


Khateeb approach the pulpit without preparation or awareness of the people's actual circumstances. The sermon, meant to guide and awaken, has in many places turned into a ritualistic formality.

Instead of addressing current social, moral, or economic challenges in the light of the Qur'an and Sunnah, sermons often drift into irrelevant discussions or theoretical debates. Many also become unnecessarily lengthy,

causing fatigue and boredom among listeners. Sadly, this sacred practice is at times misused to spread sectarianism, causing unnecessary rifts within the Muslim community. This trend has led some people to arrive late for Jumu'ah, deliberately avoiding the sermon altogether.

The Qur'an clearly commands: "O you who believe! When the call is proclaimed for the prayer on Friday,



hasten to the remembrance of Allah and leave off trade.”

(Surah Al-Jumu'ah, 62:9)

Yet, when sermons lose meaning and connection, the remembrance they are meant to inspire becomes absent. In contrast, wherever a Khateeb speaks with sincerity and relevance, people gather early, listen attentively, and leave spiritually renewed.

The Need for Broader Understanding

A true Khateeb must not only be a religious scholar — an 'Alim, Maulvi, or Mufti — but also a person of insight and awareness. Alongside religious learning, he should have a clear understanding of the political, social, and economic realities of his time. Only such awareness enables him to relate divine guidance to people's actual conditions.

Unfortunately, many who deliver sermons today are unaware of the pressing problems within their own communities. Without this understanding, how can they provide relevant guidance or meaningful direction?

The guidance of the Qur'an and Sunnah is not theoretical; it must be integrated into the fabric of everyday life. A Khateeb must therefore link the Qur'an and Sunnah to modern challenges — offering practical wisdom rooted in faith. This combination of scholarship and worldly insight is essential to restore the real impact of the Khutbah.

Khutbah and Leadership

Historically, even rulers in Islamic states used to deliver the Friday Khutbah. They did so for three key reasons:

1. To guide the people toward living righteously.
2. To listen to grievances and understand the public's condition.
3. To hold themselves accountable before the community.

Thus, the Khutbah was not only a sermon



but a platform of public communication and accountability — a reminder that leadership itself is a sacred trust.

Khutbah of Eid and Nikah

The Khutbah of Eid and Nikah share the same spirit of guidance and reflection. It is narrated in Bukhari and Muslim that when the Prophet ﷺ went to the Eidgah on Eid al-Adha or Eid al-Fitr, he offered two rak'at of prayer, then stood before the people to advise and guide them. At times, he would issue important orders or send delegations afterward, showing that even moments of joy were used to remind people of faith and responsibility.

He would also address women specifically, guiding them on their duties and moral conduct — a clear sign of his inclusiveness and concern for every segment of society (Bukhari and Muslim).

Khutbah of Nikah: The Foundation of a Family

The Khutbah of Nikah too shares the same noble essence. It marks the beginning of a sacred bond between two souls who are to lay the foundation of a home — a unit where faith, love, and moral values are nurtured. At such a defining moment, the sermon should focus on the beauty,

sanctity, and responsibilities of marriage as taught in the Qur'an and Sunnah.

The Khateeb should remind the couple of the importance of patience, forgiveness, and mutual understanding, and offer practical guidance for building a home based on peace and compassion. In truth, this Khutbah serves as a form of counselling and moral orientation, helping the newlyweds appreciate each other's nature and prepare for the challenges ahead.

Ideally, such a sermon is best delivered by a close relative or someone familiar with both families, a father or may be a brother — one who understands their circumstances and can speak sincerely from the heart. Unfortunately, what is often seen today is the opposite: a stranger delivers a routine address, merely to fulfill a formality, without real concern for the couple's future.

Reviving the Spirit of the Khutbah

The Khutbah — whether for Jumu'ah, Eid, or Nikah — is not simply a formality but a means of awakening hearts and reforming society. Its purpose is to guide, remind, and unite the Muslim community around the values of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

To revive its true spirit, every Khateeb must return to the Prophetic model — sermons that are:

- Sincere and concise,
- Connected to current realities,
- Rooted in Qur'anic wisdom, and
- Delivered with emotion, clarity, and purpose.

Only when the Khutbah regains its sincerity and relevance will it once again become the voice of guidance for the Ummah — reviving faith, strengthening families, and reforming society as a whole.

(Writer & Speaker)

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We Support Landless Locals, Not Land Mafias: Tahir Syeed

In this excerpt from the “Rubaroo” interview series, **Faizan Qureshi** speaks with National Conference spokesperson and former journalist **Tahir Syeed** about his journey from journalism to politics, the party’s one-year report card, and the current political landscape in Jammu and Kashmir.

Faizan Qureshi: You began your career in journalism before moving into politics. What inspired that transition?

Tahir Syeed: Journalism taught me to observe closely — politics taught me to act. I began writing letters to editors even as a student, and by 2006 I was working in the field. Reporting exposed me to the system’s realities up close. Over time, I realized that writing about issues was not enough; one has to be part of the process that brings change. Politics seemed the natural continuation of that journey.

Politics also ran in the family — my grandfather, uncle, and father were all involved in public life. Growing up in that environment shaped my thinking. Journalism gave me perspective; politics gave me purpose.

Faizan Qureshi: Your family had long ties with the National Conference, yet you first joined the PDP. Why?

Tahir Syeed: Initially, I was supposed to join the National Conference. I had even met Omar Abdullah, and discussions with the party’s leadership were underway. But a communication gap emerged at the last moment, and the move didn’t materialize.



Around the 2014 elections, the PDP projected a youth-centric vision — space for young people, fresh ideas, and a modern outlook. That attracted me. Their manifesto placed youth at the centre, promising opportunities and inclusion. Unfortunately, much of it later remained unimplemented. But at that time, the energy and intent appealed to me.

Faizan Qureshi: Critics claim the National Conference has changed its core stance over the years. How do you respond?

Tahir Syeed: Flexibility is not weakness. No political party can survive without adapting to time and circumstance. But adaptation is not abandonment. The National Conference has never deviated from its fundamental principles — democracy, dignity, and self-respect.

When we adjust our strategy, it’s to serve those goals better, not to compromise them. Just as a farmer adjusts his sowing to the season but still seeks the same harvest, our objective — serving the people — remains constant.

Faizan Qureshi: Some senior figures



within your party have recently made statements that seem to contradict the leadership's position. Is there internal discord?

Tahir Syeed: Absolutely not. Differences of opinion exist in every organization — even in families. Leaders like Ruhullah Mehdi or Mian Altaf are seasoned politicians. They've



raised concerns, and both have clarified the context of their remarks.

Healthy debate strengthens a party. What matters is how those differences are expressed. There are internal forums for discussion. Taking disagreements to the media only benefits opponents. The National Conference remains united under Omar Abdullah's leadership.

Faizan Qureshi: Voters say the NC's manifesto promises remain unfulfilled.

Tahir Syeed: Implementation takes

time, especially after the administrative upheaval we inherited. Remember, after the state's downgrade to a Union Territory, the entire governance system was paralyzed under bureaucracy.

Despite that, we laid strong foundations — schemes for the poor, subsidized electricity, expanded ration benefits, bus services, and revised age limits for civil service aspirants. These are concrete steps taken in just one year. Some commitments require full statehood to implement, but the direction is clear.

Faizan Qureshi: The Rajya Sabha elections brought accusations of cross-voting and match-fixing against the NC. What's your clarification?

Tahir Syeed: The charge is baseless. Rajya Sabha voting is open, not secret. Every MLA must show the marked ballot to the party's authorized agent before casting it. The National Conference had forty-one votes, and every single one was accounted for under the party whip.

If irregularities occurred, they were among independents or smaller parties without agents. None of our votes went astray.

Faizan Qureshi: Does the party truly give young leaders a chance, or are decisions still limited to a few?

Tahir Syeed: Every party has a structure for decision-making — committees, boards, and consultations. The so-called "kitchen cabinet" narrative exists only outside the party. Inside, decisions follow due process.

New leadership does emerge, but politics is not handed on a platter. One must work, prove loyalty, and earn trust. Those who do inevitably rise. No one is denied opportunity, but nothing comes without struggle.

Faizan Qureshi: The Assembly recently rejected a bill on land regularization brought by PDP's Waheed Para. Why oppose it?

Tahir Syeed: Because it was misleading. It wasn't a government bill but a private member's bill, which rarely becomes law in India due to legal inconsistencies. The proposal sought to regularize land occupied after 2019 — effectively legitimizing encroachments by outsiders and powerful land mafias. Passing it would have legalized thousands of kanals seized illegally. It had nothing to do with helping the poor; it was about demographic manipulation. Our stance was clear: we support genuine landless locals, not vested interests seeking backdoor ownership.

Faizan Qureshi: Can your party's manifesto be fulfilled without restoring full statehood?

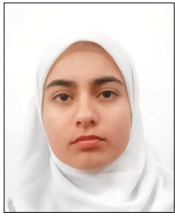
Tahir Syeed: Not entirely. When Omar Abdullah released the manifesto, he clearly said that several commitments require statehood to be meaningful. The central government itself said restoration is a process — delimitation, elections, then statehood.

We drafted our promises in that context. Some goals are achievable now; others await political restoration. But by the end of our tenure, we'll fulfill every feasible commitment under the current structure.

Faizan Qureshi: You spent nearly a decade in the PDP before resigning. What triggered that decision?

Tahir Syeed: The immediate trigger was the manipulation of mandates, but the deeper reason was principle. After 2018, the PDP vowed to rebuild with new leadership and keep doors closed to those who had undermined the party. I supported that.

But then, the same people — once branded as "garbage," as traitors — were brought back and celebrated. Those of us who stood loyal through the toughest times were sidelined. That betrayal of conviction made it impossible to stay.



Suwaiba Aijaz

Grade 10th, SRM Welkin Sopore

THE ART OF LOOKING BEYOND

There's beauty, signs, keys to unlocking mysteries, and lessons in everything around — even in the banal and mundane — if you carry a gaze of curiosity. If you lay them wide open with the lens of contemplation, you'll see it, feel it.

I'm grateful to have been blessed with such eyes — they see what's there but look for the beyond, for the unknown and unanswered. It is by virtue of the same that I have evolved into who I am today. It's the light of those eyes that showed me the path when I was cloaked in darkness. It's my insight that has leisurely enlightened my way towards the fortune I'm destined to meet.

This is my story of looking beyond — but each one of you holds your own too.

We were never created to settle steadily in a corner, but to explore every dimension our mind can behold.

For instance, while gazing at a sunset, what one should see is not merely the sun departing in the west, the birds murmuring their goodbyes, or the rose-painted horizon, but the meaning each event carries. When you feel the sun breathing its last light upon you, you're both there and everywhere as the day slips into the arms of night.

In this fleeting moment, sense a moment of reflection as it teaches you — like the sun, you fade into the night only to rise brighter again.



Soha Marazie

9th Standard, My New School Drugmulla

NOSTALGIC CHILDHOOD

Deep within the wounded heart,
Lies the spark of childhood's start.

An aching pain that won't let go, Ghosts of memories softly glow.
Each day feels like a silent fight, With shadows dancing in the light.
Haunted by what used to be, And what is lost, no longer free.

Echoes of voices once held dear, Whispers of sorrow, sharp and clear.
Each small step — a heavy stride, With daily battles hard to hide.

But hope shall never fade away, For healing waits beyond the gray.

The strength to rise above the ache, And mend the past for memory's sake.

Though scars may line the pages past, They will not hold the future fast.

A brighter tale is yet to form, A newborn chapter takes its norm.



Arwa Javaid

Grade 5, Foundation World School, Mamath

THE VOICE OF WATER

The lakes, seas, and oceans —
they all are my faces.
They all live in me.
Seahorses, seashells, and starfish — they all live in me.
I go to meet the sky through evaporation;
the sky sends her children to me — the droplets.
I absorb them, and they become a part of me.
I am as old as the Earth and the Sun.
Together, we nurture every living creature.
My origin is clean and transparent,
but the dirt you add makes me opaque and turbulent.
I like to be calm,
but sometimes I become turbulent when angry.
I am everywhere — even in you.
I am your bestie.
I am Water.



Asma Malik

Class 7th, Child Care School Handwara

MOTHER'S LOVE

A mother's love is the purest and most selfless form of love in the world. A mother cares for her child from the moment they come into this world. She sacrifices her time, energy and even her happiness for the sake of her children. Her heart is full of care, affection, and endless love.

When we are sad or worried, the first person we think of is our mother. Her comforting words and gentle touch make everything feel better. She understands our needs before we even speak. A mother cooks for us, helps us in our studies, and teaches us good manners. She guides us to choose the right path in life.

A mother always prays for her children's success and safety. Even when we make mistakes, she forgives us and helps us to improve. No one can take the place of a mother. Her love is precious and priceless.

We should respect, obey, and take care of our mothers. A mother is truly a blessing from God. I love my mother very much.



Masrat Altaf

Grade 8, Little Angels Secondary School, Natnussa

SAVE LAL KOUL – SAVE OUR TOMORROW

Once upon a time, Lal Koul flowed like a ribbon of life through the heart of North Kashmir — pure, sparkling, and full of joy. It carried with it the laughter of children playing on its banks, the songs of women washing clothes, and the blessings of nature that made our fields green and our hearts grateful. My elders tell me that only two decades ago, people drank its water with pride, calling it the soul of our land.

But today, the same Lal Koul is gasping for breath. The water that once gave us life is now burdened with waste and pollution. The stream that once reflected the blue sky now carries our negligence and carelessness. We are silently killing what has kept us alive for generations.

Lal Koul is not just a stream — it is the heartbeat of North Kashmir. It feeds our farms, our orchards, and our animals. If it dies, a part of us dies too. Let us open our eyes and our hearts. Let us promise that we will not let this precious gift disappear before our eyes. Let us stop dumping waste, plant trees along its banks, and teach everyone the value of what we still have left. Saving Lal Koul is not just about saving water — it is about saving our future, our land, and our very identity.



Aisha Fayaz

Class 10th, Kupwara Public School, Kupwara

LIFE'S WHISPERS

Life whispers in the breeze, Moments dancing as they please.
In fleeting time, we find our way, Embracing each new unfolding day.
In laughter, tears, and grace, we see The untold beauty of this mystery.
In the tapestry of life, we are each a thread, Love's the needle stitching moments we spread.



CHILDCARE SCHOOL HANDWARA

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 Handwara, Jammu & Kashmir

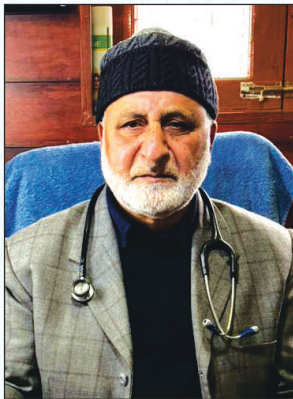
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ENROLL TODAY FOR A BRIGHTER TOMORROW

ESS BEE MEDICAL CENTRE HOSPITAL REGIPORA, KUPWARA

OUR MOTTO "QUALITY HEALTHCARE AT DOORSTEP"

DIRECTORS MESSAGE



At Ess Bee Medical Center Hospital, our journey began in 1989 with a shared dream — to bring quality healthcare to Kupwara. Founded by Dr. Sheikh Abdul Samad, Dr. Ghulam Mohammad Sheikh, and Dr. Sheikh Ali Mohammad, Ess Bee (Sheikh Brothers) started as the district's first private diagnostic centre, later expanding into a full-fledged Medical Center cum Nursing Home in 2006.

With faith, dedication, and constant innovation, we have continued to upgrade our services and facilities to meet modern healthcare standards. Our mission remains the same — to serve our people with compassion, excellence, and integrity.

**DR. GHULAM
MOHAMMAD SHEIKH**

**MEDICAL DIRECTOR
(ESS BEE HOSPITAL)**



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- E.N.T
- PEDIATRIC SURGERY
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- OPHTHOMOLOGY
- GENERAL MEDICINE
- ANAESTHESIOLOGY
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- U.S.G

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- BIOCHEMISTRY
- HAEMATOLOGY
- BLOOD BANK AFFILIATED TO SDH KUPWARA

SUPPOTIVE SERVICES

- CSSD
- SECURITY
- RAMP
- HOUSEKEEPING
- AMBULANCE
- PARKING
- LIFT
- GENERATOR BACKUP

