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# KASHMIR CENTRAL

# THE Mother Figures

We continue our exclusive series by our Editor-In-Chief Bashir Assad wherein he shares stories of his close encounters with terrorists and how different people saved his life. And among these saviours, figure women, who, he calls the special mother-figures he can never forget.





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**KASHMIR CENTRAL**



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VOLUME 3 | EDITION 50  
10 DEC 2023

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# LEST WE SHOULD FORGET

Jammu and Kashmir's Jamaat-e-Islami is presently approaching every mainstream leader in the Valley for securing its organisational and individual interests. But let's not forget that Jamaat indoctrinated almost two generations of Kashmir and made them spill their blood on the streets.

**S**INCE my teens, I have been calling the bluff of Jamaat-e-Islami Jammu and Kashmir. My belief reinforces with each passing day that Jamaat-e-Islami is an organisation of hypocrites who have no collective or individual character. This Jamaat has only destroyed the rich socio-cultural and religious harmony of this land of saints. They only led the youth of Kashmir to the path of death and destruction. Jamaat indoctrinated almost two generations of Kashmir and made them spill their blood on the streets. But hurrah, whenever the situation didn't favour them, they would withdraw, surrender and come to their knees in the name of '*hikmat aqli*' (the tactical retreat). They got killed thousands of you on the same pretext as of surrender, withdrawal and retreat.

The people of Kashmir Valley curse them for their double standards. Now they are approaching every mainstream leader of the Kashmir Valley for securing their organisational and individual interests. It is the Jamaat-e-Islami that slaughtered thousands of their detractors (both armed and unarmed) for not acceding to them. They made the mainstream politics unethical and forbidden. They would name and shame the people who were directly or indirectly affiliated with the mainstream politics, made them suffer, discredited them, called them traitors and infidels. But always secured their interests through the same politicians.

I believe those politicians are also shameless and should be condemned who are yet again coming to the rescue of Jamaat. And when I called out the bluff, the politicians across the political parties get annoyed. Either they would have been in Jamaat's anti-human crusade in the past or they will tend to be in the future, on this foolish hypothesis that Jamaat would support them in the elections. It is absolutely ridiculous on their part. Jamaat has always ditched its allies and it will definitely do so in the future. It is their ideological belief.

Today, it is crystal clear to even a blind person that Jamaat is a group of selfish, characterless people who won't spare you when they make a comeback on socio-political landscape of Kashmir.

However, more than anything else, people need to keep a track of events which may unfold in coming weeks and months. If Jamaat-e-Islami, for the sake of its '*hikmat aqli*' participates in the elections as and when held directly or indirectly, it should also be held accountable for thousands of those killings it executed simply for taking part in elections.

Hypocrisy: When others would participate in elections, it is treason, betrayal and you will kill them; and it is '*hikmat aqli*' if you do the same thing.

**Bashir Assad**



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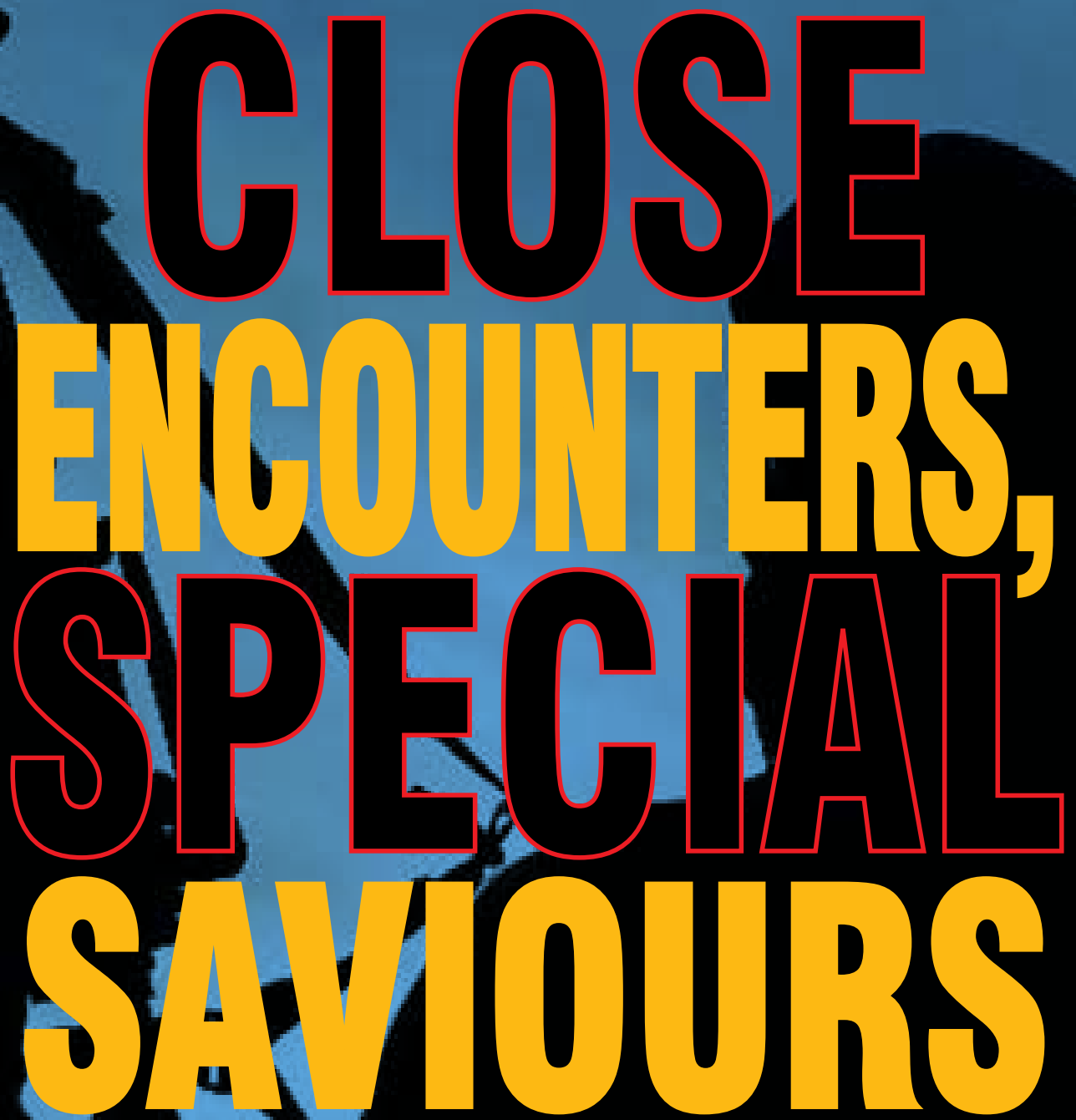
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# CLOSE ENCOUNTERS, SPECIAL SAVIOURS

by **Bashir Assad**

Continuing our exclusive series started last week, our Editor-In-Chief Bashir Assad recounts his close encounters with terrorists and the related stories in which different people saved him. And among these saviours figure different women, who, he calls the special mother-figures who he can never forget.

THE tipper crossed Marhama village, and took to the National Highway 44 at Sangam towards Bijbehara. I walked from the tipper's back-end towards the driver's cabin, requesting the driver to drop me. The driver didn't stop until he reached Bijbehara town. There, he stopped at a petrol pump and I de-boarded. The driver didn't look at me. He just came down from the vehicle and walked towards the public convenience at the fuel station as if he didn't notice there was someone on the backside of his vehicle. I was wearing a black coloured *burqa* given by Lateefa Mam which had turned red because of the brick dust. I tried to dust it off but couldn't. I crossed the road to board another vehicle which could drop me at the Sangam bridge. I was waving at every vehicle coming from Anantnag side. After a long haul of around 30 minutes, a Maruti 800 stopped. The car owner, while looking at my dusty *burqa*, hesitantly asked me to board on the back seat. He was disappointed by the kind of clothing I had on. The disappointment was written all over his face. He would have imagined of a beautiful woman boarding his car in the wee hours to enjoy the travel! Anyways when I asked him in a very low tone to drop me at Sangam bus stop, he got more perplexed, as my voice was uglier than my clothes! He immediately applied brakes

and with an angry face, pointed towards me to de-board! To this day, I feel for that young man who would have taken it as a bad omen thinking he had given lift to a person as ugly as I was at that time! The poor man had no idea that the person under the *burqa* had just dodged the angel of death with the help of that beloved mother who, later, I heard, died at a young age and who I never met after that incident.

After getting out of the car, I started walking gently on the Marhama road. I was in dilemma whether I should remove the *burqa*, unveil myself and go straight home or should I hide for some more time, fearing consequences of running away from the custody of dreaded terrorists. There was a riot of thoughts running in my head. There were more questions than answers. What would happen to Lateefa Mam who, on hearing from the terrorists' commanders about my abduction, had actually fought with them the whole night and had given them an assurance of handing me over to them after serving me something in the morning and then without caring about the consequences, had helped me run away from their custody? How must have my family spent the entire night knowing that this mad guy was in the custody of killers?

Knowing that people roaming around could easily notice something suspicious, as, beneath the *burqa*, I walked wearing men's shoes. It was very

difficult to hide my identity. Fortunate I was that a *burqa*-clad woman was coming from the opposite side, with her face exposed. Oh it was Mubeena, my class fellow Nazir Wani's wife! We were neighbours too. As she was about to cross me, I gently called her, "Mubeen!" She quickly identified me. "Bhaai Jaan!?" she explained. "Yes, your Bhaai Jaan," I responded. The news of my abduction had spread all over my neighbourhood and Mubeena and her in-laws too had been in shock. Mubeena was intelligent and sharp. She quickly removed



her *burqa*, asked me to remove mine which was full of dust. Then I put on her *burqa* and her shoes. She wrapped my shoes in the dusty *burqa*. I was now following Mubeena silently, at a distance. She took me straight to her home.

Now this is where a third 'mother' enters the sequence of events. Azi, who I would fondly call Azze Mouj (Mother Azi), burst into tears on seeing me. Her two sons Nazir Ahmad Wani (Mubeena's husband) and the eldest one (Gull Muhammad Wani) were home at that time.





Azze Mouj immediately asked me to take a bath and directed Mubeena to go to my house and inform Saabe (my mother) that Bashe (Bashir) was back and safe at their house. Gull Muhammad informed me that Gani Chechi (my father Haji Abdul Gani), Khaliq Cheche (my uncle Haji Abdul Khaliq), Ghulam Hasan (my elder brother), Muhammad Ismail Dar (a relative) and a couple of neighbours had gone to Waghama early morning to get me released. My family has been known for being aggressive and fearless. I knew my family would take on the dreaded terrorists and loaded guns without caring for their lives. One argument that my father would always put forth was – “Bloody, my son is not an informer, nor is he a characterless guy”. He was so confident of me being totally innocent that he would face bullets for my sake.

The story that followed, went like this: As my family members, friends and neighbours reached the Waghama locality and started searching for the terrorists, the locals got a sense that there would be a bloodbath because this time, the terrorists had chosen a wrong target. Everyone who knew our family profile bet that the ‘Mujahideen’ had to repent. On sighting the terrorists, my father and uncle straightened the long wooden sticks they had taken along from home. It was apparently foolish on







their part to fight guns with sticks but it also reflects on their fearlessness and character. This was not the first time they were eye-ball to eye-ball with the terrorists. More such anecdotes would figure in the coming chapters. As reported by Muhammad Ismail Dar, my father, on locating Gul Drange, tried to hit him on his head with the wooden rod but missed the target. As the terrorists (12 in number) unlocked their guns, my father and uncle, unmoved and undeterred, didn't submit. They were resolute on facing the ferocious terrorists. The commander, however,

came in between and started a conversation. My parents insisted they produce Bash Lal (Bashir) before them, and only then, they would listen to them. On this, the terrorists reported that I had fled from their custody. But my family didn't believe them. There was a heated argument which continued for some time, till Ghulam Qadir Najar, the husband of Lateefa Mam and a dear friend of my father, appeared on the scene. Najar took my father to a side and narrated the story. Now, they relaxed. And terrorists got furious, demanding that I should be handed over to them for interrogation. My father challenged the terrorists with full confidence, "*Haath lagakar dekho, haath nahi kaate to kehna (I dare you to touch him. We will cut your hands)*". My family members and neighbours returned home relaxed and relieved. My mother Saba and wife Parveena were in complete shock till Mubeena informed them about my return. My son Sohail was just two at that time and had not slept the whole night. Upon listening to Mubeena, he insisted he be taken to his Abu (father). Mubeena brought Sohail to me. I fondled him as I sat with Azze Mouj who looked at us with so much unconditional love.

Well, mothers aren't only those who birth you. There are also those who give you rebirths. I was indeed a favourite child of these mothers who touched my life so beautifully.

Rest in peace, my beautiful mothers.



# Know the real intention...

J&K's Jamaat-e-Islami was founded with high socio-structural and spiritual aims and intentions. But over the years, the Jamaat has changed tracks and has been serving separatism and intends to keep the atmosphere vicious. As a five-year ban on it comes to an end, it's crucial for people to not fall for its camouflage.

by **Mian Tufail**



▼  
**J**AMAAT-e-Islami of Jammu & Kashmir is a cadre-based socio-political organisation that came into being in the early 20th century. The main aim of the founding fathers of the Jamaat was to spread the teachings of Islam to achieve positive socio-structural changes in the society, and impart modern scientific education to Kashmir's nascent middle class and eradicate folk Islam. Even as it stood on a concrete foundation, Jamaat-e-Islami has had to witness a tumultuous journey in the landscape of Jammu and Kashmir due to

certain vested interests and ambitions.

The Jamaat-e-Islami of Jammu & Kashmir has taken a path much different from its counterparts in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Although it continues to work with the same ideological framework as the other two, the trajectory of Jamaat's development has been different. In the past, Jamaat fought elections in Kashmir with a huge fanfare, and after the birth of insurgency, the Jamaat stayed away from mainstream politics and announced its allegiance to separatism. This entanglement of Jamaat with separatism leads to the witch-

hunt by its members towards the mainstream ideologues.

The present dispensation of the BJP government in 2019 banned the Jamaat for five years under an anti-terror law on grounds that it was "in close touch" with militant outfits and was expected to "escalate secessionist movement" in the state. A notification, banning the group under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, was issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs after a high-level meeting on security, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The ban was followed by a massive crackdown on the outfit in the Valley. Around 150 leaders

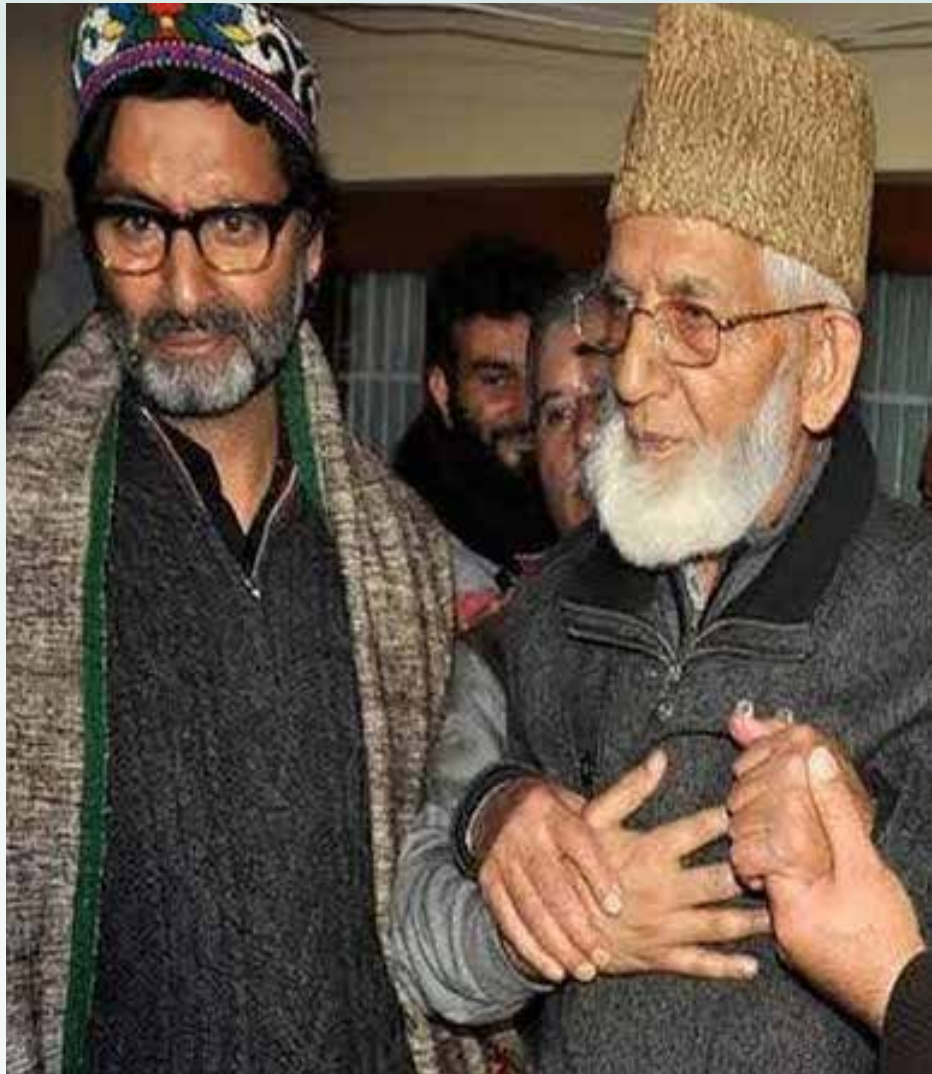


and activists of the outfit have been detained in raids across Kashmir. Several properties belonging to the outfit or its leaders have been seized by the government since the ban was imposed.

The ban in 2019 was the third such ban imposed upon Jamaat. Earlier, it was banned for the first time in 1975 by the then J&K's CM Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah for two years and subsequently for three years. Later, when another Kashmiri - Mufti Mohammad Sayeed - was the country's Home Minister, a ban was imposed on JeI again in 1990.

## THE PRESENT JAMAAT TACTICS

During the Assembly elections of the erstwhile state of Jammu & Kashmir in 2014, it was a known fact that JeI en-mass voted for People's Democratic Party (PDP) in South Kashmir. The alliance between Jamaat and PDP has roots in history. Under the guise of being a socio-religious organisation, the JeI has made a number of alliances with mainstream parties in Kashmir and influenced the former governments at the Centre too. Being portrayed as a religious organisation, Jamaat took notorious benefits from the successive governments of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir. They have always tried to influence decision-making in the political sphere of the State and mobilise people to keep the atmosphere vicious.



Today, as per sources, Jamaat is in secret talks with different mainstream parties here in Kashmir. As the five-year ban on the JeI nears to end in a couple of weeks, the Jamaat activists and leaders are on their toes to formulate secret alliances and pacts with the regional parties of Kashmir. The Jamaat has little credibility to save its house but the vote bank it carried in some pockets of Valley forced mainstream parties to obey their engagement and alliance.

Jamaat, which was on the forefront to wrest out Kashmir from mainland India and integrate the region with Pakistan, are claiming their

allegiance to the country. It's a welcome move if Jamaat shuns its ideology and appears on the mainstream sphere of Jammu and Kashmir. But the way Jamaat swears secret allegiance with different parties, it looks like a new tactic to deceive the amateur politicians of Jammu and Kashmir and the move is sheer hoax.

There shall be no secret dealings to swear allegiance with the country. Hiding behind the screen and projecting themselves as pseudo-nationalists will have future repercussions and could dent the image which the Union Government has created after





the abrogation of Article 370. The interference in the political and administrative landscape of Kashmir is the old ploy of Jamaat to run its business and not to come to the forefront to accept the integration of Kashmir with the rest of the country. It's time for mainstream politicians in the Valley to not fall prey to the ideology which has lit fire in the neighbouring countries of Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The Jamaat has a secessionist

stand on J&K. It maintains that J&K is a “disputed territory”, and seeks its resolution through “right to self-determination”. Despite being vocal on self-determination, Jamaat hides behind the mainstream parties in the Valley to save its base and to offer votes to these parties in return. This unholy alliance, as per sources, is still doing rounds and in the future after the ban expires, the Jamaat will do every possible move to remain relevant and play the shots secretly.



# In the wellness *of* things

by **Sheikh Abid**

**W**INTERS have already knocked at the doors in the Valley. With foggy mornings & chilly evenings, the temperature is dipping below subzero levels every alternate day.

Winters in Kashmir, besides bringing charm to the mountain-clad Valley, also come up with their unique kind of challenges. One such challenge are the frequent cold-driven diseases like pneumonia, COPD, IPF, bronchitis, chest infections, fever, cold & other similar diseases. And thanks to these infections and illnesses, we witness a huge rush of patients thronging the primary and tertiary public healthcare facilities across the Valley. And for this reason, the availability

Though J&K's performance on ten health parameters is better than the national average, and much is being done to uphold and upgrade the medical facilities in the UT, the pace and the infrastructure need to be looked into to ensure that good health becomes a part of life in the Valley, especially during the harsh winters.



of adequate facilities in these government run hospitals attains vital importance, especially during winters.

## PUBLIC HEALTHCARE

▼  
In the UT of Jammu and Kashmir, the public healthcare infrastructure functions at three levels: (i) at the primary level consisting of SCs, PHCs, CHCs, HWC-PHCs and CWC-SCs for preventive, promotive, curative, rehabilitative and palliative care such as maternal healthcare, neonatal and infant care, family welfare, chronic communicable diseases, non-communicable diseases; (ii) at secondary, district and tehsil level hospitals for supplying remedial and preventative care to patients;

(iii) at the territory level, in which come the district-level public hospitals which provide specialised healthcare facilities for inpatient and outpatient care.

According to official numbers of DHSK, Jammu and Kashmir has a total of 2,102 public healthcare institutions presently functional, including district, sub district hospitals/CHCs,

PHCs/MMCs, trauma centres, sub-centres besides tertiary care institutes. Going by the statistics, J&K has a higher number of health institutions in rural and urban areas as compared to the neighbouring Himachal Pradesh (160), Punjab (240), and Haryana (159). Uttar Pradesh, the most populous state, has only 831 hospitals.



## BUT WE ARE SHORT ON DOCTORS...

Various hospitals across J&K are facing an acute shortage of doctors. As per rules, the health sector is the responsibility of respective state governments. However, under the centrally sponsored National Health Mission, financial support is provided to states and union territories to strengthen the public health system, including support for infrastructure, human resource, drugs, equipment, based on the requirement proposed by the states in their programme implementation plan. None of the hospitals in J&K is accredited by the National Accreditation Board of Hospitals. Despite advertisements, doctors are not willing to work in J&K, mostly because of the salary offered and 'unprofessional' environment in the state.

"Recently, many specialist doctors have resigned from the Valley's top tertiary institutes in

order to join newly opened high-tech private hospitals. Apart from a better package, the reason they left the top institutes was toxic & unprofessional environment there," shares a doctor.



## A MISSING INFRASTRUCTURE

Besides a good professional work culture, there is a clear dearth of adequate hands-on facilities, especially during winters. The gaps in the following facilities are a big concern:

- i) An uninterrupted 24X7 electricity supply beyond tertiary care facilities. Usually district and sub district hospitals face this issue of regular power cuts during winters which hamper their smooth functioning.
- ii) Absence of adequate heating arrangements among hospitals is another cause for concern. There





has to be a proper heating infrastructure installed to ensure that patients and attendants are comfortable.

iii) Engagement of doctors, paramedical staff, nurses and nursing aids to fill the vacant gap of doctor-patient ratio. There has already been much hue and cry over lack of manpower in almost all the hospitals of the Valley.

iv) A centrally controlled command centre for emergency mishappenings like snow avalanche incidents, road accidents in far-off places, delivery cases etc is also missing. There has to be a control room for effective action in those emergency

situations.

v) Availability of enough critical medicines and similar life saving facilities like the ICU should be made a priority during winters.

vi) Absence of a good number of doctors, specialists in OPDs to cater to the growing flow of patients amidst winters, is also a big concern.

Besides these issues, aspects like proper road connectivity with far-off villages & cut-off areas of the Valley like Gurez, Tanghdar, Uri are a concern. Also, the immediate availability of enough night shift staff, warm water facilities, clean canteens etc is a problem.

But, assures a health





official, “we have already made recruitments for varied paramedical staff in the past month and are also getting newly-appointed junior residents from various necessary disciplines. Besides, the PSC has also made selections of various gazetted posts, including medical officers, recently. We hope more staff will join us to fill the gap”.

## THE ACHIEVEMENTS

Despite the lacunae, there also has been a major improvement in the overall public health facilities in Jammu & Kashmir since it became a UT.

The UT administration has been working with much sensitivity to ensure the common man has access to quality healthcare. It is pertinent to mention that J&K’s performance on ten health parameters is better than the national average, which is a testimony to the administration’s commitment towards upholding quality of life and transformation in the health sector of the Union Territory.

The LG, only a few months ago, noted that more than Rs 7000 crore has been spent on strengthening the health infrastructure and Rs 881 crore to upgrade the dilapidated infrastructure in districts. “With two new AIIMS, seven new medical colleges, five new nursing colleges, upgradation of ten nursing colleges and two bone & joint hospitals, Jammu & Kashmir is redefining healthcare delivery system in the country.



Two state-of-the-art cancer institutes are also coming up, one each in Jammu and Srinagar, and an MoU with Tata Cancer Institute has been signed to provide the best care and ensure trained manpower. The work on a bone & joint hospital in Srinagar has been expedited and is expected to be completed by the end of this year,” the LG had said.

Along this, some 98 percent population has access to Ayushman Bharat, which has proved to be a boon to the poor and the marginalised sections of the society as well as the middle





class. Earlier there was no facility for critical care ambulances; however, now they are available round-the-clock across the Union Territory.

“Accessible, affordable and quality healthcare for every citizen of J&K UT is our top priority,” the LG is known to have promised.

Well, no doubt the UT is performing relatively well in providing health and medical amenities to its citizens; the level & the pace need to be improved. The government health institutions at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels miss the mark recommended by the World Health Organisation standards and a lot more needs to be done.

Appropriate maintenance and operation of the health infrastructure are required in addition to supply and provision to achieve a sustainable health status. Upgrading the accessibility of health infrastructure should be taken care of at all levels to advance and strengthen the health of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, especially during these harsh winters.



Let's Talk About

*Nadru*



# NADRU *is* the ART OF PRESERVING HERITAGE

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KASHMIR CENTRAL | 10 DEC 2023



by **Waheed Jeelani**

While nadru continues to grace the platters of Kashmir, it transcends the boundaries of taste, connecting generations through the artistry of its crunch and the richness of its flavour. The culinary odyssey of nadru is not just a story of a vegetable; it's an exploration of Kashmir's cultural identity, preserved bite by delicious bite.



IN the heart of Kashmiri cuisine lies an unsung hero, a vegetable that carries with it the essence of the Valley's rich culinary heritage - nadru, the lotus stem. Across Kashmir's gastronomic journey, nadru stands out as a unique and versatile ingredient, celebrated for its distinct crunchiness and its ability to absorb the myriad flavours that define the region's culinary identity. This culinary odyssey explores the story of nadru, tracing its journey from the tranquil waters of the lotus flower to the vibrant kitchens of Kashmir.

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## **BOTANICAL BEAUTY: THE LOTUS STEM**

▼  
Nadru, derived from the roots of the lotus flower (*Nelumbo Nucifera*), is a botanical marvel that graces the serene waters of lakes and ponds across Kashmir. Beneath the floating lotus leaves, the stem grows submerged, concealing a crunchy and porous interior. Revered for its ornamental beauty, the lotus flower's stem transforms into a culinary gem when plucked from the waters, ready to embark on a flavourful journey in Kashmiri kitchens.

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## **HARVESTING NADRU: A DELICATE ART**

▼  
The harvesting of nadru, the revered lotus stem, is a time-honoured tradition in the

verdant landscapes of Kashmir. Woven into the fabric of the region's agricultural practices, nadru harvesting is not merely a utilitarian act; it's a symphony of skill and tradition that unfolds on the serene waters of Kashmir's lakes and ponds.

As the lotus flowers bloom, signalling the arrival of the nadru season, skilled harvesters embark upon a delicate expedition. Wading through the still waters, these custodians of tradition employ an intricate technique passed down through generations. Armed with nimble fingers and a profound understanding of the lotus plant's ecosystem, they delicately pluck the lotus stems, ensuring minimal disruption to the aquatic habitat. This process, often described as a dance with Nature, requires a nuanced touch to preserve the integrity of the stems.

In Kashmiri households, nadru harvesting is not merely a chore; it's a communal affair that fosters a sense of togetherness. Families gather by the water's edge, generations intertwining like the lotus roots beneath. The elder members, repositories of ancestral wisdom, guide the younger ones in the delicate art of nadru extraction. It's a rite of passage, a cultural inheritance, where the rhythmic plucking of lotus stems becomes a metaphor for the seamless transmission of knowledge.

The timing of nadru harvesting is crucial, synchronised with the ebb and flow of the seasons. Early mornings witness the harvesters

gracefully navigating the waters, their silhouettes mirrored in the calm expanses. The lotus stems, concealed beneath vibrant leaves, await their turn to be cradled by skilled hands. The connection between the harvester and the harvest is palpable, a communion that transcends the pragmatic act of gathering food. It's a spiritual choreography, where each lotus stem pulled from the water carries with it, the whispers of tradition and the promise of a culinary journey.

In this delicate ballet, every harvested nadru stem becomes a vessel for the stories of Kashmir. As it makes its way from the waters to the kitchen, it carries not just the freshness of the lotus pond but also the cultural richness of a people deeply rooted in their land. The delicate art of nadru harvesting, with its rituals and rhythms, is a testimony to the symbiotic relationship between the people of Kashmir and the natural bounty that graces their abode.

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## **FROM WATERS TO THE PLATTER**

▼  
Nadru's culinary transformation begins as it transcends from the waters to the bustling kitchens of Kashmir. Renowned for its unique texture - a crisp bite that gives way to a succulent interior - nadru finds its way into an array of traditional dishes. One such delicacy is 'Nadru Monje,' where the lotus stem is dipped in a gram flour batter and deep-fried to golden perfection. This dish showcases the



vegetable's ability to absorb the flavours of the spices, creating a harmonious blend that dances on the palate.

## THE ROYAL WAZWAN: NADRU ALL THE WAY

In the grandeur of the Wazwan - Kashmir's ceremonial feast - Nadru emerges as a star ingredient, holding its own amidst a lavish spread of dishes. 'Nadru Yakhni,' a yogurt-based curry with lotus stem, highlights the vegetable's versatility as it effortlessly absorbs the yogurt and aromatic spices, creating a dish that is both hearty and flavoursome. The royal Wazwan, with its intricate recipes passed down through generations, showcases nadru as a culinary jewel in Kashmir's gastronomic crown.

## BEYOND THE WAZWAN

Nadru's culinary repertoire extends beyond the grandeur of the Wazwan. In 'Nadru Monje Korma,' the fried lotus stem finds itself bathed in a rich, spiced gravy, embodying the culinary innovation that defines Kashmiri cuisine. Additionally, 'Nadru Yakh Wangan,' a dish where lotus stem is combined with brinjal (eggplant) in a flavourful curry, showcases the vegetable's ability to harmonize with diverse ingredients.

## PRESERVING TRADITION: NADRU IN PICKLES AND CHUTNEYS

Nadru's journey through Kashmiri cuisine wouldn't be complete without a nod to the art of preservation. In traditional households, the lotus stem takes

on a pickled avatar in 'Nadru Monje Achar.' This tangy pickle, with its medley of spices, is not only a testament to the resourcefulness of Kashmiri kitchens but also a celebration of the region's commitment to preserving culinary traditions.

## CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

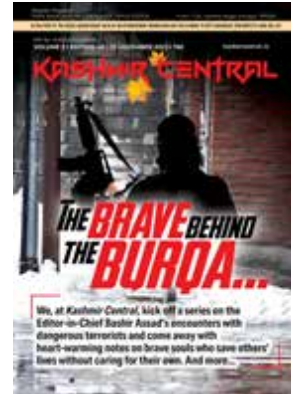
Nadru isn't just a culinary delight; it's a symbol of celebration woven into the fabric of Kashmiri festivals. During the festival of Shishur, when the valley is blanketed in snow, nadru becomes a centrepiece in the celebratory feasts. Its presence on the festival platter is a nod to the resilience of Kashmiris who find joy and festivity even in the face of the harshest winters.

In the saga of Kashmiri cuisine, nadru stands tall as a symbol of tradition, innovation, and the harmonious relationship between the people and their land. Its journey from the quiet waters of the lotus pond to the aromatic kitchens of Kashmir is a testament to the region's culinary prowess. As nadru continues to grace the platters of Kashmir, it perpetuates the legacy of a vegetable that transcends the boundaries of taste, connecting generations through the artistry of its crunch and the richness of its flavour. The culinary odyssey of nadru is not just a story of a vegetable; it's an exploration of Kashmir's cultural identity, preserved bite by delicious bite.

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