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**Arif Nizami**

Arif Nizami died -- and the lights went out in my soul. I knew he was very ill, and dangerously so, but still I could never imagine his life coming to an end. It was one of the worst shocks I have had, after the death of my cousin Babar Tajammul, which I will never ever get over.

The last couple of years have been dreadful, with people I knew or close to me dying. I started wondering: why is this happening? It finally hit me: the problem is that people of my age group have entered the death zone, but our tendency is to think that we are indestructible, which is why we feel immortal. We forget that nothing is permanent, except the Almighty.

Arif was a unique individual. His was a life full of ups and downs. Above all, he was a survivor. He was the son of the famous Hameed Nizami, founder of the Nawa-e-Waqt Group who passed away early, in his mid-40s. At that time, Arif was just entering his teenage years, as was his brother. The newspaper began to flounder; Hameed Nizami’s brother, Majeed Nizami, had started a rival publication called Nida-e-Millat. Majeed Nizami finally acquired the full shares of Nawa-e-Waqt as well.

After some time, Majeed wanted an English language newspaper too, and it fell upon Arif to launch ‘The Nation’ of which he became the founding editor with Majeed the editor-in-chief. The paper became a success.

Before Majeed died, he transferred the ownership of the Nawa-e-Waqt to his daughter. Arif though was made of sterner stuff and with the help of some friends launched ‘Pakistan Today’ which became the most readable newspaper in Pakistan.

The age of the printed word was dying, and electronic media had taken centre-stage, and except for opinion columns there was very little new for Arif to print. Yet, he made a go of it. Amongst the magazines that Pakistan Today printed, ‘Profit’ became and continues to be a terrific publication. That was the one of the great things about Arif; he understood the pulse of his craft better than most. He carefully assessed the gaps of the journalism market -- which made him a success.

Arif Nizami epitomized all that should be right in journalism. He was a man of strong and correct principles, on which he never compromised. His analysis was thoughtful and loaded with substance. Always speaking and writing with conviction and authority, Arif Nizami became one of the most respected and admired journalists in the country. He wrote with clarity and honesty. On television, he was a voice of truth. The public respected his analysis and opinions greatly, as they knew his main endeavour was to speak the truth. He was never drawn into the current media climate, which centres on bias and hysteria. He was calm, considered and, above all, factual.

For three months, he also became the minister for information of a caretaker government. Towards the end, he focused primarily on his new baby, 'Pakistan Today'. However, he didn’t get enough time to institutionalize it. There is nobody like him in journalism yet, and we will be hard pressed to find a replacement. Hopefully, his son, Yousuf, will pick up the torch and carry it further. He will have our prayers. Rest in Peace, Arif. See you soon.

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