



# GENDER & MEDIA WATCH

October 2024



A monthly round-up of news stories about women and women's representation in Pakistan's news industry

# EDITOR'S NOTE

## The Lessons from the Alleged College Rape Case

October was an intense month in Pakistan, with emotions running high amid stifling heat and frustration. This unrest among the youth reached a boiling point when rumours spread that a student at Punjab College in Lahore had been raped on campus. It was alleged that fellow students heard disturbing noises and that authorities covered up the incident. The rumours gained further traction when government officials in Lahore took to the media, denying the incident and stating that, while a female student from Punjab college was hospitalised, her condition was not the result of a rape.

However, trust in government statements was already eroded among the public, many of whom felt deceived by prior unfulfilled promises and perceived a lack of transparency. Students across Punjab took to the streets, with some protesting to support the alleged victim, while others—primarily young men—seemingly used the opportunity to engage in vandalism and clashes with police, which tainted the legitimacy of an otherwise significant movement. Meanwhile, media channels presented evidence dismissing the assault as fabricated, though they assured the public that an investigation was underway. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz made a controversial remark, inadvertently furthering public mistrust by implying that rape survivors are left "impure." This statement, coupled with the notion that the incident might be a case of misinformation, added further complexity to the already volatile situation.

In summary, it was a month marked by widespread anger and distrust, highlighting both the willingness

of the youth to speak out and the power—and potential hazards—of unverified news on social media.

So, what can we learn from this?

Firstly, this incident underscores the growing determination of Pakistan's youth to advocate for justice and stand in solidarity with those they believe to be victims. It also brings into question the intentions of some protestors, suggesting that not all participants are genuinely committed to fighting for justice. At the same time, the uproar reinforces that rape is an intolerable crime that demands attention and action. However, this event also brings to light the complex issue of misinformation, as many willingly accepted unverified accounts and speculation. It also raises critical questions about the sources from which Pakistanis get their news and the credibility of these sources.

While only time will reveal the full story, three things are certain: rape can no longer be ignored, Pakistan's youth are prepared to stand against those who fail to address the gravity of such crimes, and the news industry must adopt a fact-checking system. This system should verify the truth of such cases quickly and establish itself as an authority, ensuring its findings are credible and beyond doubt. The media must recognise its primary responsibility: to determine whether something is true or false. To achieve this, it must develop mechanisms capable of confirming information with accuracy and wield enough influence to guide a public prone to accepting information without question.

# MAJOR STORIES

\*Click on the heading to read the full story

01  
October  
Dawn

## HEART DISEASES ON THE RISE AMONG WORKING WOMEN, SEMINAR TOLD

Heart diseases among Pakistani working women in urban areas are on the rise as they experience higher stress levels while managing both family life and professional responsibilities, shared an expert at a symposium held at a local hotel on Monday. One out of every three women worldwide suffers from high blood pressure. This rate is much higher in our country, where working women in urban areas have dual responsibilities. Today, we see an increasing number of professional Pakistani women suffering from hypertension and heart diseases," said Dr Khalida Soomro, former head of cardiology at DUHS.



04  
October  
Daily Times

## 'GENDER GAP IN SCHOOL ATTENDANCE WIDER AMONG 25-40 AGE GROUP'

In Pakistan, the gender gap in school attendance is wider among the 25-40 age group (64% males vs. 47% females), narrows in the 5-9 age group (71.5% males vs. 65.4% females), showing progress in gender parity. Gallup Pakistan, as part of its Big Data Analysis initiative, is looking at Ever Attended School statistics for Pakistan. This data is part of a study conducted using the '7th Pakistan Population and Housing Census'.



05  
October  
The Nation

## WOMEN-LED STARTUPS SHOWCASE INGENUITY, BUSINESS ACUMEN

The finale of the 'Built by Her 5.0 Innovation Challenge' took place at the Aga Khan University showcasing a lineup of top women-led startups from across Pakistan. The event brought together entrepreneurs, investors, and ecosystem leaders to celebrate innovation and empowerment. The 'Built by Her 5.0 Innovation Challenge' highlighted creativity and perseverance of women entrepreneurs, recognising their remarkable achievements.



08  
October  
The News

## MARYAM LAUNCHES TRANSPORT INITIATIVE FOR GIRLS' COLLEGES IN PUNJAB

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz inaugurated the 'CM Transport Programme for Women in Girls' Colleges' on Monday, under which 76 buses have been dedicated to girls' colleges across Punjab. In Phase-I of this initiative, 19 buses were provided to women's colleges. The chief minister met with students from these colleges, who presented her with a bouquet. During the inauguration, the chief minister called the female students on stage and handed over the keys of the buses to the principals of 19 women's colleges.



# MAJOR STORIES

\*Click on the heading to read the full story

11  
October  
Daily Times

## DR ZAKIR NAIK'S REMARKS ABOUT WOMEN AND MARRIAGE SPARK BACKLASH

Dr. Zakir Naik's remarks about unmarried women has sparked backlash from several Pakistanis including prominent celebrities. The Islamic preacher, during his visit to Pakistan, had claimed, "There is no way an unmarried woman can be respected. So, they have two options. First, get married to a man who already has a wife, or she will become a 'bazaar aurat'-public property. I don't have a better word. Any respectable woman would opt for the first option."



13  
October  
Dawn

## AN EVENING OF CLASSICAL DANCE

The Sound of Tinkling Bells, an evening of classical dance by Sheema Kermani, at the World Culture Festival Karachi-2024 at the Arts Council of Pakistan on Friday evening gave the audience a chance to watch various styles of classical dances practiced for centuries in the subcontinent. The first of these, titled Aao Raqs Karo, based on feminist Urdu poet Fahmida Riaz poem symbolised women's freedom and liberation. Sheema dedicated the dance to all feminists who have been struggling and fighting for their rights in our country. "It's dedicated to our spirit of resilience," she said.



16  
October  
Express Tribune

## PAKISTANI WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS AND SOLE PROPRIETORSHIP

In today's Pakistan, a woman striving to break free from structural patriarchy and social elitism as a sole proprietor confronts a convoluted web of rules and requirements. The existing regulatory environment, designed for registering and then building non-profits or for-profit companies and businesses, requires not only significant capital investment, but enough social and political power to counter entrenched barriers rather than providing solutions.



23  
October  
The News

## CALL FOR WOMEN UPLIFT TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE

Women from over 132 districts nationwide, including the four provinces and the regions of Gilgit-Baltistan and AJK, got together in the capital to demand recognition of women as 'farmers,' at the inaugural event of the three-day '17th Annual Rural Women Leadership Training Conference' on Tuesday. The conference is organised by Potohar Organisation for Development Advocacy (PODA) in collaboration with Lok Virsa.





# MAJOR STORIES

\*Click on the heading to read the full story

26  
October  
The News

## LYF KICKS OFF WITH 100 METRE TRIALS FOR GIRLS

The 100-metre girls' trials for the Lahore Youth Festival started with the arrival of athletes from 28 universities across Lahore at Fortress Stadium on Friday. Director-General Sports Punjab Pervez Iqbal attended the trials ceremony as the guest of honour and praised the dedication of the aspiring athletes for the upcoming festival. "The strong turnout of athletes in the 100-metre trials is highly encouraging," said Pervez Iqbal, who announced that the festival would feature eight competitive games with cash prizes totaling Rs8million for winners.



29  
October  
Dawn

## 80 GIRL SCHOOLS IN AZAD KASHMIR, GB TO GET IT EQUIPMENT

The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training in collaboration with Unesco will provide advanced IT equipment in 80 government girl schools across Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). "The decision was finalised on Monday in a meeting chaired by the secretary education and attended by Unesco education team and other senior officials from the ministry," says a press release issued by the ministry. It said the secretary education underscored the importance of bridging educational disparities in remote areas of Pakistan.



30  
October  
Express Tribune

## EMPOWERING WOMEN WITH LAND RIGHTS STRESSED

Addressing a seminar on empowering women through land rights for advancing the Sustainable Development Goals organised on Tuesday at the Government College University Faisalabad, Dr Asia Saif Alvi, Chairperson of Political Science Department at University of Sargodha highlighted the interrelationship among women's right to land and property, their economic independence and the SDGs. He emphasised that without ensuring women's rights to land and property, their economic independence is not possible; and without ensuring their economic independence.



31  
October  
The Nation

## AWARENESS SEMINAR ON BREAST CANCER HELD FOR RURAL WOMEN

In observance of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the Rural Health Center (RHC) Putwar Bala organized a seminar on Wednesday aimed at educating rural women about breast cancer detection and treatment. The event featured contributions from District Health Officials, including Dr. Feroz Shah, Dr. Muhammad Atif, Dr. Mamoon, and Dr. Khalid Yousaf, alongside the Breast Care Team from Alkhidmat Hospital Peshawar, which included Dr. Shahid Ullah (Breast Surgeon), Dr. Kainat (General Surgeon), and Dr. Shafaq (Radiologist).



# EDITORIAL

# ON GENDER

What have editors said about gender issues in Pakistan? Click on the boxes and find out!

## THE NATION

[Aggressive and Insensitive](#)

[PGC's Crisis](#)

[Protecting Women](#)

[Selective Outrage](#)

## DAWN

[Rising rape](#)

[Police brutality](#)

[Two steps back](#)

[Protecting children](#)

[More questions](#)

[Explosive mix](#)

[Human rights review](#)

[Breaking barriers](#)

[Controversial guest](#)

[Crimes of collusion](#)

## THE NEWS

[Saving our children](#)

[Cycle of exclusion](#)

[Confounding case](#)

[Pinktober](#)

## EXPRESS TRIBUNE

[Population bomb](#)

[Encouraging start](#)

[High abortion rate](#)

[Violence against  
children](#)

[Innocence lost](#)

[Out of the run](#)

[Fabricated?](#)

[Seeking pardon for Aafia](#)

[Combatting breast cancer](#)

# STORIES IN THE DIGITAL SPHERE

A roundup of this month's trends and viral stories on gender-related issue on Pakistan's internet

## #LahoreRapeCase

A news about a young girl being sexually assaulted at GCU Lahore got viral. Students, feeling that the government was intentionally suppressing the story, went out to the streets to protest nationwide



## #ZakirNaik

Televangelist Zakir Naik was lambasted by Pakistani netizens over his problematic remarks on women during his tour in Pakistan. They ranged from not shaking a girl's hand to blaming the victim for getting assaulted



## #ZardPattoKaBunn

HUM TV's "Zard Patto Ka Bunn" was showered with praise online. Its last episodes, where the lead character graduates with honours, was highly praised for supporting women's right to education



# MEDIA STATISTICS

Data derived from media-monitoring throughout  
October 2024

Descriptive						
	Total	Daily Times	The News	Dawn	Express Tribune	The Nation
Women Specific Stories (WSS)	1051	188	297	206	190	170
Front Page WSS	41	6	15	7	4	9
Back Page WSS	87	30	35	8	30	13
Women Specific Columns	27	3	8	6	8	2
Columns by Women Writers	127	30	21	34	26	16
Women Specific Editorials	33	4	4	9	12	4
Female Reporters (FR)	256	2	144	54	54	2
Front Page FR	13	0	9	4	0	0
Back Page FR	12	0	7	5	0	0

Comparative Mean					
	WSS	Editorial( WSS)	Female Reporter	Columns (WSS)	Columns by Women
Daily Times	6.064516	1	0.0645161	0.096774	0.96774194
The News	9.580645	1	4.6451613	0.258065	0.67741935
Daily Dawn	6.645161	1.125	1.7419355	0.193548	1.09677419
Express Tribune	6.129032	1.2	1.7419355	0.258065	0.83870968
The Nation	5.483871	1	0.0645161	0.064516	0.51612903

1. Women-specific includes all the news stories, columns and editorials that are dedicated to women's achievements, problems, status etc.

2. All female sources that are named and not named (such as lady reporter) are considered female reporters.



# PICTURES OF THE MONTH



Women take part in yoga session at local mall during awareness campaign about breast cancer in Lahore

Courtesy: The Nation

Students of the Government College University stage a protest sit in on the mall against alleged rape incident

Courtesy: The News



Women players in action during a football match at the Sports Complex in Islamabad

Courtesy: Dawn

# PICTURES OF THE MONTH



Women admire a cultural painting during the inauguration ceremony at Pak-China Friendship Centre, Islamabad

Courtesy:  
The Express Tribune

Women walk with their camels as they look for customer for milk on the street near Committee Chowk Rawalpindi

Courtesy: Daily Dawn



A large number of women and men participate in a rally to express solidarity with the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir

Courtesy: The Nation

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GenderWatch

## Disclaimer:

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# CONTENT

If you want to read the full story, click on the link. Please subscribe!



## MAJOR STORIES

Check out the stories that were published in the news this month on women's issues and their achievements in Pakistan!

## DIGITAL SPHERE

Click to see what events and hashtags have been trending on the internet this month!



## MEDIA STATISTICS

How many women reporters were on the Front Page this month? How many female guests were interviewed on TV? Check the GMW to find out!

