



GENDER & MEDIA WATCH

July 2025



Photo courtesy: Daily Times

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

EDITOR'S NOTE

Steps Forward for Pakistani Women

It is not often that we get to celebrate two major wins for women in Pakistan in quick succession. The past few weeks have brought policy progress at the state level and a ground-breaking achievement by a woman who dared to dream.

The government's decision to include the mother's name alongside the father's on passports may seem like small bureaucratic adjustment. It is in fact a powerful acknowledgement of women's identities in their own right. This decision shows that mothers are no longer invisible in official documentation, and that children are not defined only by their paternal lineage. This is a step toward changing the cultural narrative that has previously sidelined women's identities.

This is not the first time women's right to their own identity has been strengthened. Back in October 2021, NADRA abolished its (unofficial) policy that forced married women to put their husband's name on the CNIC. Women were given the choice to either retain their father's name or take their husband's making it clear that identity belongs to them.

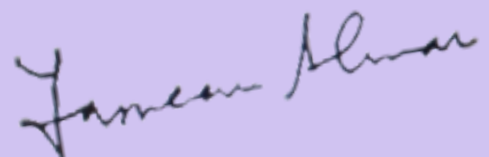
These milestones point towards a more inclusive Pakistan - one that isn't highlighted enough in the media. Progress is not always linear and Pakistan's women have a long way to go. There is no doubt that the challenges remain, but steps like these chip away at the structures that limit women's choices.

EDITOR'S NOTE

As Nida Saleh drives the metro and as the government finally acknowledges mothers on passports, we are reminded that recognition and representation matter.

At the same time, in Lahore, Nida Saleh Malik has made history as Pakistan's first woman train driver. Her appointment on the Orange Line Metro is a personal triumph and also a reminder that women can excel in fields that were once thought to be "off-limits." With training and sheer determination, Nida has turned her fascination with trains into a career that serves thousands daily. Her journey also highlights another important reality, that families may hesitate at first, but with support and encouragement, women are breaking barriers once considered unthinkable.

It is now important to keep this momentum going. Policies must continue to reflect women's lived realities, and society must continue to open doors to their aspirations. Because when women move forward, the whole country does.



Tasneem Ahmar,
Executive Director,
Uks Research Centre

MAJOR STORIES

*Click on the heading to read the full story

01

July

Dawn

HRCP RECORDS RISE IN VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, CHILDREN IN KP

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan on Monday released its annual report on the human rights situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, reporting a “significant” increase in violence against women and children, sectarian strife and tribal feuds. The report, which was released by provincial chief of the HRCP Akbar Khan during a news conference at the Peshawar Press Club, noted that the law and order situation in the province remained “weak” last year. It added that the province had recorded a significant increase in the acts of violence against women and children, including domestic violence, sexual assaults and honour killings.



02

July

The Nation

ECP COLLABORATION WITH FJWU TO PROMOTE WOMEN'S ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), in collaboration with Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU), will work to promote civic education, enhance electoral literacy, and encourage inclusive participation in the electoral process, particularly among young women students. This commitment was formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed on Tuesday at the ECP secretariat in Islamabad. The MoU was signed by Secretary ECP Omar Hamid Khan and Vice Chancellor FJWU Prof Dr Bushra Mirza, in the presence of Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja



05

July

The News

UNSEEN SCARS OF COURAGE: WOMEN POLICE OFFICERS IN THE LINE OF DUTY

In societies where patriarchal structures dictate traditional roles, the notion of women venturing into fields historically dominated by men, particularly those fraught with peril, is often met with skepticism, if not outright resistance. The dangerous world of crime fighting, a labyrinth populated by hardened criminals, clandestine mafias, politically connected offenders, and powerful, unscrupulous individuals who wield influence from the corridors of power, seems an almost insurmountable fortress for women, especially those operating with limited resources.



09

July

Express Tribune

WOMEN-FOCUSED SKILL PROGRAMMES LAUNCHED

In a transformative effort to reshape the technical and vocational education landscape, Pakistan's National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) has launched multiple initiatives inspired by China's successful models. These programmes are not only equipping youth with market-relevant skills but are also empowering women in traditionally male-dominated trades, said Gulmina Bilal Ahmad, Chairperson of NAVTTTC. In an interview with the China Economic Net, Gulmina Bilal Ahmad emphasised the need for empowering youth – especially women – through inclusive, research-based and sustainable skill development initiatives.



MAJOR STORIES

*Click on the heading to read the full story

13

July

The Nation

CIVIL SOCIETY URGES EXPANSION OF PINK BUS SERVICE

Civil society activists have called for the expansion of the Pink Bus Service across Pakistan to ensure safer, more accessible and dignified travel options for women, especially those commuting from rural and suburban areas to cities for education and employment. Talking to APP here Saturday, Advocate Aliya Faheem, a traveller welcomed the initiative and emphasized the growing demand for such gender-sensitive transport. "The Pink Bus service is not just a transportation option, rather, it is a step toward women empowerment.



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July

The News

FDE LAYS OFF 202 FEMALE COMPUTER TEACHERS

The contracts of 202 female computer teachers under the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) have been terminated following the conclusion of the "Sustainability of Computer Labs" project, rendering them unemployed and uncertain about their future prospects. The project, launched in 2018 and funded by the Universal Service Fund, officially ended on June 30, 2025, according to an official notification. It was a joint initiative of the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication, the Universal Service Fund, and the FDE, which regulates government schools and colleges in Islamabad.



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July

Express Tribune

WOMAN TURNS PARACHUTE THREAD INTO FASHIONABLE FOOTWEAR

Ghazala Asfaq, a Quetta-born entrepreneur now based in Faisalabad, has introduced a unique concept in footwear by designing handmade shoes using parachute thread branded as crochet shoes.

A graduate of Balochistan University, Ghazala left her career as an office assistant and later as a teacher, choosing instead to follow her creative instincts.

Her initial attempts at crafting wool-based tops and sweaters met with lukewarm reception. Still, her resolve did not waver.



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July

Daily Times

GOVT TO INCLUDE MOTHER'S NAME ALONGSIDE FATHER'S ON PASSPORTS

The Federal government decided to introduce a major change to the national passport, making it mandatory to include the mother's name alongside the father's on all newly issued and renewed passports. A spokesperson for the Directorate General of Immigration and Passports said that the move has been taken in line with international standards and evolving social requirements. The change aims to align Pakistani passports with global documentation norms while acknowledging the importance of both parents' identities. The updated format would apply to all newly issued passports as well as those being renewed.



MAJOR STORIES

*Click on the heading to read the full story

22
July

The Nation

IHC SERVES CONTEMPT NOTICE TO PM, CABINET IN DR AFIA CASE

The Islamabad High Court (IHC) Monday issued contempt notices to the Prime Minister and the Federal Cabinet in a petition filed by Dr Fowzia Siddiqui, seeking the repatriation, and release of her sister, Dr Aafia Siddiqui, who is imprisoned in the United States of America. A single bench of IHC comprising Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan conducted hearing of Siddiqui's petition and issued the notices against Prime Minister and members of the federal cabinet over the government's failure to submit a report in the Dr Aafia Siddiqui case.



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July

Dawn

SC DENOUNCES USE OF INFERTILITY CLAIMS TO TARGET WOMEN

The Supreme Court on Wednesday denounced the distressing and sorrowful social practice of 'weaponising' infertility, or even the mere suspicion of it, against women. "This social prejudice routinely results in courts of law becoming venues for humiliating a woman under the guise of litigation," regretted Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Yahya Afridi. The CJP, who was part of a two-judge bench alongside Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb.



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July

Express
Tribune

DIVORCED DAUGHTER ENTITLED TO PENSION

The Supreme Court has struck down a Sindh government circular that denied pension entitlement to a daughter who was divorced after the death of her pensioner father. "We find that the circular, which imposes restrictions unsupported by the Act or the Rules, is void ab initio, unconstitutional, and of no legal effect. The timing of the pensioner's death cannot lawfully be used to extinguish a surviving daughter's right to claim pension," reads the 10-page judgement authored by Justice Ayesha Malik, as the court dismissed the Sindh government's appeal.



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July

Daily
Times

NIDA SALEH BECOMES ORANGE LINE METRO'S FIRST FEMALE DRIVER

In a landmark achievement, Nida Saleh has made history by becoming the first female driver of Lahore's Orange Line Metro Train. Her appointment marks a significant step forward for gender equality in Pakistan's public transport sector, breaking barriers in a male-dominated field.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif personally congratulated Nida on this inspiring milestone. She praised her courage and dedication, stating that "daughters like Nida Saleh are the pride of the nation" and emphasized her government's firm commitment to empowering women.



EDITORIAL ON GENDER

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

DAWN

['Honour' kills](#)

[Wounded women](#)

[Making a misogynist](#)

EXPRESS
TRIBUNE

[In the name of honour](#)

[Scourge of honour](#)

THE NATION

[Tribal Tyranny](#)

[Justice, Not Sympathy](#)

THE NEWS

[Dishonourable honour](#)

[War on women](#)

DAILY TIMES

[Bride's Rights](#)

[Price of Honour](#)

[No Sanctuary](#)

STORIES IN THE DIGITAL SPHERE

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

#BalochistanJustice

The shocking Balochistan incident, in which a newlywed couple was brutally executed under tribal jirga orders, has sparked nationwide outrage after a harrowing video of their killing went viral. The footage, showing them being shot in cold blood, ignited protests both online and on the streets, with calls to dismantle illegal tribal courts and ensure justice under state law. Rights activists stress that although honour killings have been criminalised in Pakistan, weak enforcement especially in remote areas continues to leave women vulnerable to patriarchal violence.



#Humaira Asghar

The tragic case of actress and model Humaira Asghar has left Pakistan in shock after her decomposed body was discovered in a Karachi apartment nearly nine months after her death. Found in isolation, with signs of neglect and mystery surrounding her final days, the incident has sparked conversations about mental health, loneliness, and the hidden struggles faced by public figures. Her family's refusal to claim the body has added to the heartbreak, underscoring the need for compassion, stronger social support systems, and greater awareness of the silent battles people fight behind closed doors.



MEDIA STATISTICS

Data derived from media-monitoring throughout
July 2025

Descriptive						
	Total	Daily Times	The News	Dawn	Express Tribune	The Nation
Women Specific Stories (WSS)	807	170	195	141	181	120
Front Page WSS	23	7	7	5	1	3
Back Page WSS	102	45	26	10	45	20
Women Specific Columns	34	8	10	9	6	1
Columns by Women Writers	100	32	16	32	13	7
Women Specific Editorials	12	3	2	3	2	2
Female Reporters (FR)	205	0	119	37	48	1
Front Page FR	11	0	9	2	0	0
Back Page FR	12	0	11	1	0	0

Comparative Mean					
	WSS	Editorial(WSS)	Female Reporter	Columns (WSS)	Columns by Women
Daily Times	5.483871	1	0	0.258065	1.03225806
The News	6.290323	1	3.8387097	0.322581	0.51612903
Daily Dawn	4.548387	1	1.1935484	0.290323	1.03225806
Express Tribune	5.83871	1	1.5483871	0.193548	0.41935484
The Nation	3.870968	1	0.0322581	0.032258	0.22580645

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



Multan: A lady commuter rides an eco-friendly electric scooter on the busy Khanewal Road in the city.

Courtesy: The Nation

Islamabad: Author Saira Sheikh briefs the audience about her debut book *Healing in the Shadow of Loss* at the launching ceremony at Biblio Café.

Courtesy: Dawn



Rawalpindi: Wardens stop a motorcyclist along Murree Road for violating traffic laws.

Courtesy: The News



PICTURES OF THE MONTH



Participants attended The News Education Expo held at the Expo Centre.

Courtesy: The News

Lahore: Art lovers take keen interest in a painting exhibition at Al-Hamra Art Gallery.

Courtesy: The Nation



Portuguese: Ambassador Frederico da Silva plays chess with Rumaysa Batool at the first Portugal-Pakistan Chess Tournament, held in collaboration with the Portuguese Embassy and the Chess Federation of Pakistan in Islamabad.

Courtesy: Dawn



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GenderWatch

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