



GENDER & MEDIA WATCH

October 2025



Photo courtesy: Ai generated

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

EDITOR'S NOTE

A Judiciary That Finally Sees Women

Pakistan is witnessing a shift in its legal landscape. A series of Supreme Court rulings that confront the patriarchal logic embedded in our systems for decades. For once, the highest court is speaking directly to women's realities. The message running through these decisions is simple but long overdue: women are equal citizens, and their rights cannot be conditional on consummation of marriage, obedience, or a husband's convenience.

Marriage is not a barrier to women's public lives

The first ruling that shook the system was the case of Farakh Naz, the KP teacher fired from her job simply because she got married. The KP Service Tribunal upheld this decision but the Supreme Court struck it down.

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah reminded the country that a woman's participation in public life is not a favour that is granted to her. It is in fact a constitutional right. Marriage does not diminish a woman's competence or her aspirations. It is only patriarchal systems that assume it should. When the state pushes women out of the workforce, it is discriminatory. And it is also a blow to development.

Maintenance is a woman's right

Ambreen Akram's judgement is also significant. Where the Supreme Court held that a woman's right to maintenance (nafaqa) begins from the moment the nikah is signed regardless of rukhsati/consummation. For decades, husbands have denied maintenance by deliberately delaying rukhsati and creating conditions to escape responsibility. The Lahore High Court's earlier decision which tied maintenance to consummation was called 'deeply patriarchal' by Justice Shah.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Perhaps the most important development is the Supreme Court's recognition of psychological and emotional abuse as valid grounds for khula. This is a turning point in Pakistani family law. For generations, courts have treated physical violence as the only "real" harm, referring to emotional torture, manipulation and control as 'marital issues.' Women have been told to be patient and to endure. But the Court has now affirmed what we women have always known... that psychological abuse destroys just as deeply as physical violence.

No longer will women need to produce bruises to prove suffering. No longer can abusers hide behind the claim that "no physical violence occurred."

A country still failing its women

Across these rulings a pattern is emerging. Women's rights are being violated not through one off incidents, but through discriminatory rules, outdated judicial interpretations, and cultural beliefs that cast women as dependants rather than equal partners.

Excluding women from public life damages the country as a whole.

Also denying women autonomy, safety and economic security weakens the social fabric.

If the Supreme Court must repeatedly remind lower courts and institutions that women are equal citizens, then our systems are failing.

The state must act because the judiciary has opened the door

Landmark judgements cannot transform society on their own. They must be accompanied by structural change.


A turning point

The Supreme Court has challenged patriarchal assumptions head-on. It has affirmed women's autonomy, acknowledged different forms of violence, and placed women's economic rights beyond male discretion.

EDITOR'S NOTE

The question now is whether the rest of the state like lawmakers, bureaucrats, service tribunals, police, and the media will follow.

Women in Pakistan do not need charity or conditional allowances.
They need the rights the Constitution already promises.



Tasneem Ahmar,
Executive Director,
Uks Research Centre

MAJOR STORIES

*Click on the heading to read the full story

01

October

Daily Times

MAN ARRESTED FOR HARASSING GIRL THROUGH FAKE FACEBOOK ACCOUNTS

The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) conducted a successful raid in Panjgrain, district Gujranwala, arresting a man accused of sharing immoral content and blackmailing a young girl through social media. According to NCCIA spokesperson, the raid, led by Sub-Inspector Muhammad Bilal of NCCIA Gujranwala, was carried out on Tuesday in connection with FIR No. 176/2025, registered under Sections 20, 21 and 24 of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) 2016, amended in 2025. The accused, identified as Ali Hassan, son of Irshad Ahmad, was apprehended from the crime scene. During the operation, authorities recovered a mobile phone from his possession.



04

October

Express Tribune

FEMALE STUDENTS GET MODERN SPORTS FACILITIES

The Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) gifted two modern sports facilities to girls' colleges in Islamabad on Wednesday, creating new opportunities for youth engagement, physical activity, and personal development. A newly constructed pedal tennis court was inaugurated at Islamabad College for Girls (ICG) F-8/1, alongside a state-of-the-art futsal ground at IMCG F-7/4. The initiative reflects the government's commitment to providing students with enhanced opportunities to stay active, develop teamwork, and adopt healthy lifestyles.



06

October

The Nation

WOMEN MICRO-ENTREPRENEURSHIP EXPO HELD IN ISLAMABAD

Shirakat Foundation, in collaboration with the State Bank of Pakistan, has organized the Women Micro-Entrepreneurship Expo 2025 at the State Bank premises in Islamabad. The Expo served as a vibrant platform for women micro-entrepreneurs to showcase their products, share their entrepreneurial journeys, and engage directly with key stakeholders, thereby strengthening market linkages and networking opportunities. On the occasion, SBP Governor Jameel Ahmed visited women's stalls and had candid conversations with them.



08

October

Dawn

PAKISTAN'S NEXT GENERATION OF WOMEN CRICKETERS LOOK TOWARDS A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Zoofishan Ayyaz already knows who'll be on the women's national cricket team in the coming years. She, for one, hopes to make it. The dream could very well be a reality given that she captained the Strikers to a four-wicket win against the Conquerors in the National Women's Under-19 T20 Tournament final, and a performance that saw her take the player-of-the-match award. But she knows, with the firmest of convictions, that the cohort of teenage girls she plays with and against will be the future of women's cricket in Pakistan. "I'm telling you, in the coming times, cricket is about to change so much. We have incredible talent coming up," Zoofi,



MAJOR STORIES

*Click on the heading to read the full story

12
October
The News

STEPS TAKEN TO END GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN KP, SAYS OFFICIAL

District Police Officer Shafiullah Khan Gandapur on Saturday said several steps had been taken to end gender-based violence and harassment of women. "We have already imposed a ban on jirgas, where cases of harassment and honour-related incidents are often settled in violation of existing laws, depriving (Victims) survivors of justice," District Police Officer Shafiullah Khan Gandapur told a training session organised by Rights Induced Journalism (RIJ) under a memorandum of understanding at Police Lines here on Saturday.



13
October
Express Tribune

BEYOND THE MELODRAMA ON SCREEN

Experts from a cross-section of society believe that Pakistan's television drama, while portraying themes of love, conflict and family life, often reinforces problematic notions of male dominance and female vulnerability. Speaking at an online discussion organised by the Uks Research Centre (URC), they said that frequent depictions of physical violence, toxic masculinity and weak female characters reflect deep-rooted social attitudes rather than challenge them. The panel, comprising media specialists, women's rights advocates and communication experts, agreed that while some productions sensitively address mental health and relationships, many still normalise regressive behaviour.



14
October
The Nation

RUBINA FOR NATIONAL STRATEGY TO COMBAT RISING BREAST CANCER CASES

Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid has urged for a comprehensive national strategy to tackle the alarming rise of breast cancer among Pakistani women, marking the occasion of World Breast Cancer Awareness Day. Senator Khalid highlighted that breast cancer has become the most frequently reported disease affecting women in Pakistan. "One in every nine Pakistani women faces the risk of developing breast cancer during her lifetime," she said, adding that more than 100 women lose their lives every day due to breast cancer complications.



20
October
Express Tribune

YOU CAN'T FIRE A WOMAN ON MATERNITY LEAVE, RULES FEDERAL OMBUDSPERSON

In a groundbreaking ruling that strengthens protections for working women across Pakistan, the Federal Ombudsperson for Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace (FOSPAH), Fauzia Viqar, has held that terminating a woman during her maternity leave constitutes gender-based discrimination, imposing a fine of one million rupees on the private IT Firm. "Motherhood should never become a barrier to a woman's career," said Fauzia Viqar. The order came in response to a complaint filed by Zainab Zahrah Awan, who was terminated in April 2024 while on duly sanctioned maternity leave.



MAJOR STORIES

*Click on the heading to read the full story

21
October
Daily Times

PINKTOBER: THE CLUB AT EIGHTEEN HOSTS LADIES GOLF TOURNAMENT

The vibrant greens of The Club at Eighteen turned a beautiful shade of pink as lady golfers from across the city gathered for the Pinktober Ladies Golf Tournament 2025, an event dedicated to supporting breast cancer awareness. The tournament brought together golf enthusiasts for a day filled with camaraderie, competition, and a powerful message of hope. Celebrating not just the love for golf but also the strength, unity, and resilience of women, the event highlighted the importance of early detection and collective support in the fight against breast cancer.



22
October
The Nation

WOMAN ALLEGEDLY RAPED IN ISLAMABAD'S CENTAURUS MALL APARTMENT

Two persons allegedly raped a married woman in an apartment at Islamabad's Centaurus Mall within the jurisdiction of Margalla Police Station on Tuesday. The suspects have been identified as Faisal Jalal and Hafeezullah who were arrested soon after the victim reported the incident in an emergency call. The victim, identified as A*, told the police that she was called to Flat No-606, Tower of Centaurus Mall by the two persons; Faisal Jalal and Hafeezullah. Once she arrived, the men allegedly assaulted her and also recorded a video of the incident.



25
October
Dawn

LAWMAKERS SEEK GENDER MAPPING OF LAND RECORDS TO ASSESS WOMEN'S PROPERTIES

The National Assembly's Special Committee on Gender Mainstreaming on Friday called for gender mapping of all land records. In a meeting held to review the status of women's land and property ownership, the committee members sought land record data from all provinces. According to a statement issued by the Federal Bureau of Statistics, only 2.5 per cent of women in Pakistan own a house in their name, while 7.5 per cent own joint property. However, not satisfied with these figures, the committee requested detailed land records and directed provincial authorities and the Federal.



30
October
Express Tribune

LAWYER MAHNOOR LEADS FIGHT AGAINST 'PERIOD TAX'

"Since my childhood, I observed that females face serious challenges in society, especially regarding their right to health," says Mahnoor Omer, a young lawyer and activist who has taken a bold legal step against what she calls institutional discrimination toward women in Pakistan. Speaking on Express News Morning Show, she said, "If we have licences to practise law, then why not use them to challenge the injustices women face every day?" Her remarks come as the Lahore High Court (LHC) admits a landmark petition filed by her, challenging heavy taxation on sanitary pads a move that has sparked national debate over gender equality and women's health rights.



EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS ON GENDER

What editorial voices are saying on Gender in Pakistan
Click on the boxes and find out!

DAWN

[Fatal 'honour'](#)

[The decision to work](#)

THE NEWS

[Transforming care](#)

EXPRESS
TRIBUNE

[Young feminism in Pakistan](#)

[Unsanctioned motherhood](#)

[Unchecked honour killings](#)

[Discriminatory authority](#)

DAILY TIMES

[Removing Gender Imbalance in
Pakistan](#)

STORIES IN THE DIGITAL SPHERE

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

#HaniaAmir

Hania Aamir has been appointed as UN Women's National Goodwill Ambassador for Pakistan, officially taking on the role in October 2025. As a popular actor and youth icon, she will use her platform to advocate for gender equality, women's economic empowerment, leadership, education, climate action, and the prevention of gender-based violence. Her role is to focus on raising awareness, inspiring action, and amplifying the voices of women and girls across Pakistan. She succeeds Muniba Mazari, who served in this position until August 2025, and is expected to help UN Women connect more effectively with younger audiences nationwide.

HANIA AMIR

Appointed as UN Women
Pakistan Goodwill
Ambassador

Becoming one of the youngest
voices to champion gender
equality, women's
empowerment and social
inclusion.

Her appointment marks
a proud moment for
Pakistan & a reminder
that influence can
inspire action



A Historic Win for Working Women in Pakistan



In **Islamabad**, foreign-based IT firm **Embrace IT** has been fined **Rs 1 million** and ordered to reinstate a woman who was dismissed during maternity leave. This ruling upholds that **terminating employment under such circumstances constitutes gender discrimination**.

"Safe motherhood is not a favor; it is a fundamental right. No woman should be forced to choose between her career and motherhood."

— Federal Ombudsperson, FOSPAH

#WomenAtWork

A landmark ruling in Islamabad by Federal Ombudsperson Fauzia Viqar has held foreign-based IT firm Embrace IT accountable for dismissing Zainab Zahrah Awan during maternity leave. The company has been fined Rs 1 million and ordered to reinstate her.

Fauzia Viqar emphasized:

"Safe motherhood is not a favor; it is a fundamental right. No woman should be forced to choose between her career and motherhood." This decision sends a powerful message: gender discrimination at the workplace will not be tolerated.

MEDIA STATISTICS

Data derived from media-monitoring throughout
August 2025

Descriptive						
	Total	Daily Times	The News	Dawn	Express Tribune	The Nation
Women Specific Stories (WSS)	335	37	71	61	101	65
Front Page WSS	11	1	3	2	3	2
Back Page WSS	2	0	2	0	0	0
Women Specific Columns	6	1	1	2	2	0
Columns by Women Writers	5	1	0	2	2	0
Women Specific Editorials	2	0	0	0	2	0
Female Reporters (FR)	72	3	29	16	14	10
Front Page FR	1	0	1	0	0	0
Back Page FR	1	0	0	1	0	0

Comparative Mean					
	WSS	Editorial(WSS)	Female Reporter	Columns (WSS)	Columns by Women
Daily Times	1.193548	0	0.0967742	0.032258	0.03225806
The News	2.290323	0	0.9354839	0.032258	0
Daily Dawn	1.967742	0	0.516129	0.064516	0.06451613
Express Tribune	3.258065	0.068966	0.4516129	0.064516	0.06451613
The Nation	2.096774	0	0.3225806	0	0

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



Faisalabad: A student makes a clay pot at a stall during the Zarai Mela at the University of Agriculture.

Courtesy: The Nation

Islamabad: Nomad women walk with their camels on a road in the F-11 sector.



Courtesy: Dawn



Rawalpindi: A woman biker crosses the busy Murree Road.

Courtesy: Express Tribune

PICTURES OF THE MONTH



France: French Ambassador Nicolas Galey (left) confers the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres award on Fizza Hasan in recognition of her contributions to promoting theatre and Francophone culture in Pakistan.

Courtesy: The News

Peshawar: A lady health worker administers polio drops to a child on Salazak Road during the anti-polio vaccination campaign in the provincial capital.

Courtesy: The Nation



Islamabad: Students sign a board to express solidarity with Kashmiris on Black Day after marching from the Foreign Office to D-Chowk in Islamabad on Monday.

Courtesy: Dawn



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GenderWatch

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