AURAT FOUNDATION E- MAGAZINE Issue No. 01 August 2026

Pakistan Independence Day Edition

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Pakistan Independence Day Edition

Patron-in-Chief: Naeem Mirza

Founded by: Nigar Ahmed - Shahla Zia

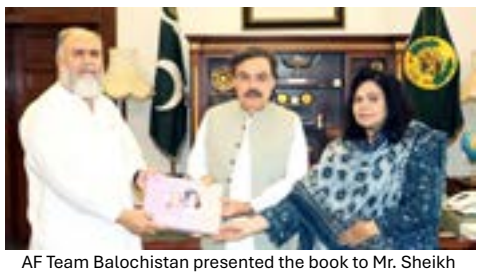
Aurat Foundation is 40 - The Journey Continues



A commemorative book has been launched, celebrating Aurat Foundation's 40-year journey since 1986, highlighting its impact on women's rights, gender justice, ending GBV, and democratic governance in Pakistan through powerful stories and milestones. (Please see details on Page 15,16, 17)



Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah presents the Global Peace Award to Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto (posthomously). Her Excellency Aseefa Bhutto Zardari, First lady of Pakistan recieving the award at the 40th anniversary ceremony of the Aurat Foundation held in Karachi. More photos on Page 3.



AF Team Balochistan presented the book to Mr. Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail, Governor of Balochistan.



AF Peshawar team presented the book to Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mr. Faisal Karim Kundi.



AF book was presented to Ms. Azma Bokhari, Provincial Minister, Punjab for Information and Culture.



AF Sindh Team Presented the book to Ms. Shaheena Sher Ali, Minister of Women Development Authority Sindh.



AF Islamabad team presented the book to Ms. Noureen Lehri, Chairperson (Acting), NCSW. (More photos on P. 18)



Shahnaz Wazir Ali, Lifetime Achievement Award



Rana Ansar, Political Leadership Award



Justice (Retd.) Majida Razvi, Lifetime Achievement Award



Sister Catherine Gill, Community Services Award



Shazia Marri, Political Leadership Award



Ghazala Kashif, Local Government Leadership Award

Celebrating Struggle for Women's Rights, Democracy

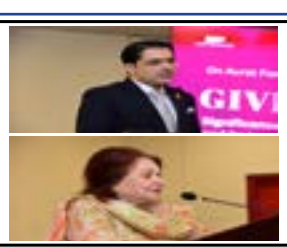
Karachi (12 February): First Lady of Pakistan Ms. Aseefa Bhutto Zardari, while addressing the 40th anniversary ceremony of Aurat Foundation at the Banquet Hall of the Chief Minister's House, paid tribute to the organisation's four-decade-long struggle for women's rights, democracy, peace, social justice, and equality in Pakistan. She said that Pakistan's history is incomplete without women and recalled her mother, Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, who believed in the meaningful participation of women in all spheres of life rather than symbolic inclusion. She emphasised that despite progress, women in Pakistan continue to face serious challenges and that true freedom will only be possible when every girl is granted her rights. Aurat Foundation President Anis Haroon, in her opening remarks, recalled the difficult journey of Pakistan's women's movement and the struggles faced by women before and after the establishment

Global Peace Award for Shaheed Benazir Bhutto

(Continued on Page 3)

Interview with Dr. Akram Sultan *Page 8*





Give to Gain Gala in Karachi *Page 4*

Intra Party Consultation on Political Parties Constitutions *Page 10*



Interview with Asma Shirazi *Page 14*

Women, Freedom and Democracy: The Unfinished Promise of Pakistan

By Mehak Fatima Jaffery



August 14 is more than a date on Pakistan's national calendar. It represents a long and difficult journey marked by political struggle, sacrifice, hope and the determination to create a country where its people could live with dignity and shape their own future.

Yet whenever we recall the Pakistan Movement, the historical narrative often centres on a handful of male leaders Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Allama Muhammad Iqbal and others. This is an incomplete history. No account of the Pakistan Movement can be complete without recognising the women who participated in it, organised it and gave it social strength.

Women did not merely remain in their homes while men made history. They attended political meetings, mobilised communities, raised funds, spread political awareness, organised women and families, participated in public activities and helped transform the idea of Pakistan from a political demand into a popular movement.

For many Muslim women of the subcontinent, the Pakistan Movement also became an unexpected opening into public and political life. Social conventions placed considerable restrictions on women's mobility and public participation. Yet the political atmosphere created by the Muslim League gave many women an opportunity to cross those boundaries and discover their own political voice.

Fatima Jinnah: More Than the Quaid's Sister

Among the women associated with the Pakistan Movement, Fatima Jinnah occupies a unique place. Remembering her simply as the sister of Quaid-e-Azam diminishes her historical importance. She was his close political companion, an active participant in the national struggle and, in her own right, a powerful public figure.

She encouraged women to participate in political life and helped communicate the message of the Muslim League among women and families. Her later political career further demonstrated that women could occupy the centre of national political debate rather than remain on its margins.

Fatima Jinnah's legacy therefore carries a larger message: women's participation in a national movement cannot be reduced to "supporting" men. Women can organise, lead, challenge, persuade and represent a political cause in their own right.

Rana Liaquat Ali Khan and the Awakening of Women

Begum Rana Liaquat Ali Khan was another important figure in the political awakening of women. Her contribution extended beyond the struggle for independence into the difficult task of building a new state. She worked to organise women and encouraged their participation in public, social and politicalaffairs. Her post-independence work in women's welfare and development reflected an understanding that the creation of Pakistan was only the beginning. A nation could not become truly strong if half of its population remained excluded from education, economic opportunity and public decision-making.



Women such as Begum Jahanara Shahnawaz, Begum Shaista Ikramullah and many others similarly challenged the conventional boundaries of women's political participation. Their presence in political meetings, organisational activities and public life helped establish an important principle: women were not spectators of history. They were its participants.

The Thousands Whose Names History Forgot

The story becomes even more significant when we move beyond famous personalities.

The Pakistan Movement depended upon thousands of ordinary women whose names may not appear in textbooks. They attended meetings, collected contributions, conveyed political messages, persuaded families and communities, and maintained the social networks through which political ideas travelled.

Their contribution reminds us that history is not made only by those whose portraits hang in official buildings. Major political transformations also depend upon the quiet, often invisible labour of ordinary citizens.

The experience of women during the upheaval of 1947 is another painful part of this history. Partition uprooted millions of people. Women faced displacement, insecurity, violence, separation and the loss of homes and communities. Their suffering and resilience formed part of the enormous human cost of independence.

Independence: A Beginning, Not an End

Independence Day should therefore make us look not only backwards but also inward.

What did the generation that created Pakistan hope to achieve?

And how much of that promise has been fulfilled?

Women constitute roughly half of Pakistan's population. A country cannot realise its full potential while millions of its women face barriers to education, healthcare, economic independence, political participation, personal security and equal citizenship.

The women of the Pakistan Movement demonstrated what becomes possible when women are trusted with responsibility and given space in public life. The challenge before Pakistan today is different from the challenge of 1947, but the underlying principle remains remarkably similar.

The struggle is no longer primarily about creating a country. It is about creating the kind of country in which every citizen can participate meaningfully in its future.

Today, the struggle is for equal opportunity, quality education, economic independence, political representation, security, dignity and equal citizenship.

From the Pakistan Movement to the Democratic Struggle

The history of women's political participation did not end with independence. It evolved with Pakistan's own democratic journey.

Women gradually entered electoral politics, legislatures, political parties, civil society organisations, universities, the media and other institutions of public life. Constitutional reforms, reserved seats and electoral participation created additional avenues for representation, although representation alone has never been sufficient.

The real question is not simply how many women enter assemblies. It is whether women are able to exercise political influence, shape legislation, participate in decision-making and bring issues affecting ordinary citizens into the national conversation.

The democratic journey of Pakistan has therefore also been a journey of women's political citizenship.

Women have contested elections on general seats as well as reserved seats. They have served as legislators, ministers, party leaders and political organisers. Figures such as Fatima Jinnah, Benazir Bhutto, Begum Kulsum Nawaz, Maryam Nawaz and numerous other women represent different periods, political traditions and visions of Pakistan.

Their political positions may differ profoundly, but their presence in national politics demonstrates an important historical transformation: Pakistani women have increasingly moved from being represented by politics to becoming political actors themselves.

Freedom is not simply the existence of an independent state. Freedom acquires its fullest meaning when every citizen woman or man has the opportunity to live with dignity, develop their abilities, speak without fear, participate in public life and contribute equally to the country's future.

Pakistan's History is Incomplete without Women: Aseefa Bhutto Zardari



A group photo of participants and awardees with H.E. First Lady Aseefa Bhutto Zardari.

(Continued from Page 1)

of Aurat Foundation in 1986. She highlighted the courage of women who faced baton charges, imprisonment, and resistance while raising their voices for equality, justice, and democratic rights.

The ceremony was attended by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, provincial ministers, members of the National and Provincial Assemblies, the Chief Secretary Sindh, senior government officials, civil society representatives, and Aurat Foundation leadership from across the country. The event highlighted women's contributions and achievements in democracy, peacebuilding, poverty alleviation, social justice, and climate action. During the ceremony, First Lady Aseefa Bhutto Zardari received Global Peace Award conferred upon Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto in recognition of her commitment to peace, democracy, and women's empowerment. The award was given by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah. On the occasion the First Lady unveiled a book documenting Aurat Foundation's 40-year journey and inaugurated a documentary highlighting the organisation's history and achievements. Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah announced a PKR 50 million grant for Aurat Foundation, reaffirming the Sindh government's commitment to women's empowerment.



Sheeba Shah, Law Enforcement Leadership Award



Rabia Malik, PWDs Leadership Award



Asiya Munir Advocate, Legal Community Services Award



Maria Ismail, Media Leadership Award



Natalia Rahim, Community Service Award



Aliya Mirza, Volunteer Service Award



Aanchal Kukreja, Aiman Hafeez, Emman Fatima & Fatima Mariam, Agri-Technology Award



Mangla Sharma, Minority Rights Award



WEALTH Foundation



Mirza Ishtiaq Baig, Community Services Award



Anis Haroon, President, Aurat Foundation



Naeem Mirza, Executive Director, Aurat Foundation



AF Directors acknowledging Sindh Government's Support



AF and women activists singing feminist song



Malka Khan, Senior Programmes Officer, Aurat Foundation



Muneezeh Khan, Resident Director, Karachi, AF


Humza Tabani, the Chief Guest addressing the seminar


Dr. Akram Sultan speaking at the seminar


Anis Haroon speaking at the seminar


Dr. Masuma Hasan speaking at the seminar

Philanthropists, Businessmen & Social Activists Celebrates 40 Years of Aurat Foundation's Legacy of Empowering Women

KARACHI- In a profound demonstration of national solidarity and social responsibility, the Aurat Foundation marked its historic 40th Anniversary Celebration with a prestigious fundraising gala titled "GIVE TO GAIN," held at the Pearl Continental Hotel, Karachi. The ceremony, which focused on the significance of social capital and its impact on inclusive development, served as a powerful tribute to the Foundation's four-decade legacy of advocating for a just, democratic, and gender-sensitive Pakistan. A symbolic highlight of the evening was the ceremonial cutting of the 40th Anniversary cake, led by the Chief Guest and the Foundation's leadership, representing forty years of resilience, empowerment, and the collective success of women across the nation.

The event was presided over by Ms. Anis Haroon, President of the Aurat Foundation, while Mr. Humza Tabani, Chairman of the Tabani Group of Companies, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. Dr Masuma Hasan. Member BoG of Aurat Foundation, eloquently narrated the history and legacy of the Foundation.

The proceedings were elegantly moderated by the Master of Ceremony, Ms. Muneezeh Khan, Resident Director of the Aurat Foundation, Karachi whose engaging style set a purposeful tone for the evening. Her professional conduct was highly praised by attendees for seamlessly weaving together the diverse themes of corporate responsibility and social advocacy.

GIVE TO GAIN MISSION

Mr. Naeem Mirza, CEO of the Aurat Foundation, delivered a keynote address on Social Capital that was met with a standing ovation. He was widely lauded for his visionary leadership and tireless dedication, having steered the organization through complex socio-political landscapes to ensure that the Foundation remained a beacon of hope for women's rights. His detailed account of the organization's journey of struggle and success provided a roadmap for the Foundation's future welfare initiatives.

This is corporate sector's duty to invest in the social equity: Humza Tabani

Chief Guest Humza Tabani echoed these sentiments, underscoring the corporate sector's duty to invest in the social equity that leaders like Naeem Mirza have spent decades building.

Ms. Asma Zeshan, Business Head at Jazz Mobilink, spoke eloquently on the role of digital inclusion, noting that providing women with technological tools and digital literacy is the fastest route to economic independence and sustainable growth in the modern age.

Dr. Akram Sultan, a leading cardiologist, highlighted the intrinsic link between women's social status and community health, advocating for specialized medical support systems and a preventative healthcare approach that prioritizes the well-being of the female population.

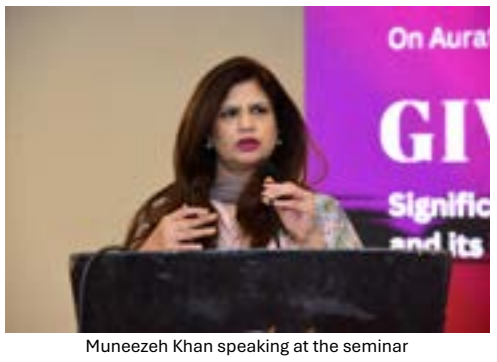
Syed Zeshan Hashmi, Business Head of the WEALTH Foundation, emphasized the "Whole-of-Nation" approach, asserting that sustainable social capital can only be built when corporate structures, industrial leaders, and humanitarian organizations align their strategic goals under a unified patriotic vision.

The fundraising gala attracted a vast array of prominent figures including Ms Simi Kamal, Chairperson/CEO of Hisaar Foundation. The guest list featured notable personalities such as Noman Saihgal, Former Minister for IT and Environment, Dr. Khalid Shaikh, Chairman of the Sindh Healthcare Commission, and Munawer Ali Mithani, MD of the Sindh Board of Technical Education. Other prominent attendees included Kabeer Ahmed, CEO of MultiTech Chemicals, Mr. Sarfaraz Ahmed Khan of Salman Foods, Dr. Salman Adil of Dow University, and Shaher Bano Walajahi, CEO of Alfatech, alongside legal and academic professionals including Kashif Advocate, Syed Salim Advocate, and Amber Sajid.

The event was also attended by Aurat Foundation senior leadership including Ms. Mumtaz Mughal-Director Programs, Mr. Asim Malik -Director Outreach, Mr Allauddin Khilji-Resident Director Quetta and Malka Khan-Provincial Manager, Karachi **-by a Staff Reporter**


Naeem Ahmed Mirza speaking at the seminar


Malka Khan speaking at the seminar


Muneezeh Khan speaking at the seminar


Simi Kamal speaking at the seminar



Simi Kamal addressing at the seminar


A view of the "Give to Gain" ceremony.


AF team presenting the book to Kabeer Ahmed.


Asma Zeeshan, Business Head, Jazz, speaking at the seminar


AF team presenting the book to Simi Kamal.


AF staff with guests at the "Give to Gain" ceremony.


A group photo with guests at the "Give to Gain" ceremony.


Zeeshan Hashmi speaking at the seminar

Opinion Page...








Forty Years of Legacy, Embracing New Thinking

In the launch of the first issue of Aurat Foundation's quarterly e-magazine, "AF Eye," we feel both joy and a deep sense of responsibility. This publication is not merely the beginning of a new magazine; it is an important part of the celebrations marking Aurat Foundation's forty-year journey. Its purpose is to preserve the struggles, experiences, achievements, and learning of the past four decades and to bring them to a wider readership.

Over the past forty years, Aurat Foundation has consistently worked to strengthen women's rights, gender equality, social justice, democratic values, and the voices of marginalized communities. Throughout this journey, the organization has not only achieved significant milestones but has also faced numerous challenges, gaining experiences that are a valuable asset for future generations. AF Eye is a new effort to document this intellectual and practical legacy.

In this inaugural issue, we have included highlights of Aurat Foundation's various activities, important events, glimpses from regional offices, special interviews, and photo reports so that readers can learn about the organization's recent work and its impact. This issue reflects our collective efforts, partnerships, and the belief that sustainable social change is possible only through continuous dialogue, mutual cooperation, and public participation.

The New Word



Asim Malak

AF Eye will be published quarterly, and each issue will focus on an important social, development, or public policy theme. The next issue in this series will be on Artificial Intelligence and social development, in which the opportunities, challenges, and impacts of this emerging technology on the social sector will be examined from different perspectives.

We are grateful to all our colleagues, writers, regional offices, partner organizations, and readers for their support. We are confident that AF Eye will not only present Aurat Foundation's work, experiences, and vision effectively, but will also play an important role in promoting knowledge, dialogue, and positive social change.

Violence Against Women: From Awareness to Apathy

Sometimes it feels as if we are sitting in a dark hall where images keep flashing before us. Before we can truly understand one image, it disappears and another one takes its place. We do not get the time to revisit, reflect, or understand the background of what we have seen. The noise begins, and then it fades away.

Recently, several cases of sexual violence and murder of children came to light. There was outrage for a short time, but within days, people moved on and forgot. The digital age has made us more aware of violence, and media and television are also addressing issues of violence against women and girls. However, I believe this constant flow of disturbing content, without deeper reflection, is gradually making society less sensitive.

Our media and social media often operate within a patriarchal mindset and understand that repeated exposure to a topic can make people lose interest. People change channels, scroll past posts, and begin to see violence as something "normal." The sensitivity created among a small part of society through the efforts of social organizations is slowly being replaced by indifference. This process is called desensitization.

Feminist Nama



Saima Munir

I fear that we are moving from empathy towards numbness. We must prevent this journey. Some important steps are: Treat every incident not just as news, but as a human tragedy. Highlight the stories of affected women and girls along with facts and figures. Promote responsible reporting instead of sensationalism.Ensure timely and clear responses from governments, institutions, and society. Create a new understanding of masculinity based on respect, compassion, consent, and protection of others' rights rather than power and dominance. Teach empathy, respect, and non-violence in schools, universities, and communities.Raise collective voices instead of remaining silent, because silence strengthens indifference.

Insensitivity does not appear suddenly; it grows every time we ignore injustice and accept violence as normal. The only way to protect our society is to keep our sensitivity, courage to question, and demand for justice alive.

This is not only about violence against women; it is about preserving the moral sensitivity of our entire society. This is the true alternative to desensitization.

Remembering a 7-year-old Child

By Naeem Mirza

In early 2018, two important events took place in Pakistan in the context of social factors, the women's movement, and particularly violence against women.

The first was a tragic incident that occurred in the city of Kasur on 4 and 9 January 2018. This incident plunged the entire society into mourning and filled women, particularly girls and young children, with profound grief and anger.

The second event took place almost two months after the first, on 8 March 2018, International Women's Day, when rallies of women and citizens were held in several cities across the country. In the first incident, a seven-year-old girl named Zainab was repeatedly raped by a serial killer, then strangled to death, and her body was thrown into a garbage dump.

In the second event, aware young women from Pakistan's universities and colleges, along with women associated with the movement, who in this "information age" had become conscious of their rights and, in particular, of the understanding that their bodies are their boundary or, as it is commonly said today, their "red line" gave the attitudes that had been imposed upon them for centuries the form of posters and slogans, and smashed the cooking pot of patriarchy in the middle of crowded public spaces.

Among these slogans, "My Body, My Choice" struck some people in the heart like a thorn of some deep-seated sense of guilt. From time to time, these people continue to soothe their insensitive and false masculine ego by hurling extremely obscene abuse at women who challenge male authority through this slogan and its message of equality, and by cursing and condemning feminists.

Since these people, and many others, have remembered only this slogan and forgotten little Zainab, let us first remember Zainab. Zainab Amin Ansari was born in Kasur in 2010. Zainab was seven years old when she was abducted on 4 January 2018 while going to receive religious education in the Holy Quran in her hometown of Kasur, Punjab. Five days later, on 9 January 2018, her body was recovered from a garbage disposal site near Lahore.

The subsequent post-mortem examination revealed that, before being murdered, she had been brutally sexually assaulted repeatedly, subjected to severe violence, and then strangled to death. Twenty-four-year-old Imran Ali, who was involved in the crime, was arrested. He proved to be a serial killer and was also found to have previously been involved in the rape and murder of at least seven minor girls in the area.

The case of Zainab Ansari was pursued by Pakistan's renowned lawyer, Mr. Aftab Ahmad Bajwa, Advocate Supreme Court of Pakistan, assisted by Mr. Hamza Khalid Farani, Advocate. Zainab's horrific murder generated intense grief, anger, protests and public reaction throughout Pakistan. As a consequence of this incident, Pakistan enacted its first national legislation concerning the protection of children, known as the Zainab Alert Bill. Under this law, a person convicted of the offence of child abuse is subject to a mandatory minimum punishment of life imprisonment.

Greeting Messages from Friends and Partners on Aurat Foundation's Continuous Journey, Courage & Resilience

Aurat Foundation received a number of messages on its 40th Anniversary. Many of these were published in our book "Milestones of Struggle and Success". Here, we are reproducing only the headlines of some messages. Please see the book for detailed reference. -- Editor

"Pakistan's Gender Parity Index requires concerted collaboration between government institutions and civil society organizations "

Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar
Federal Minister of Human Rights
Member of National Assembly, PML-N



"Since 1986, the Foundation has been a transformative force in advocating for women's rights, democratic governance"

Nuzhat Aamir Sadiq
Member of the National Assembly, PML-N
Former Chairperson of the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs



"This legacy continues to inspire our democratic and parliamentary institutions today"

Dr. Syeda Shahida Rehmani
Secretary, Women'sParliamentary Caucus
Member of National Assembly, PPP



"Aurat Foundation's 40-year journey is inseparable from the story of Pakistan's democratic and feminist struggle"

Sherry Rehman
Member of the Senate,
Senior Vice President, PPP



"From the courageous advocacy to the empowerment of grassroots women leaders, your milestones inspire us all"

Sehar Kamran
Member of the
National Assembly, PPP
Former Member of the Senate



"Your tireless efforts continue to inspire and uplift countless lives across Pakistan"

Shaista Pervaiz Malik
Member of the
National Assembly, PML-N



خوشحال پاکستان نگار اور شہلا کا خواب تھا

Mehnaz Rafi
Senior politician and women's rights activist,
One of the Founders of WAF



"AF has made Contribution to Structural Transformation of Gender Relations"

Shahnaz Wazir Ali
President SZABIST,
Former Member of the
National Assembly, PPP



"You have made lasting impact, especially in regions like Balochistan where challenges are immense and need for such advocacy is great"

Ghazala Gola
Deputy Speaker,
Member Provincial Assembly of Balochistan, PPP



"It's a tribute to an enduring feminist legacy that continues to shape lives, narratives, and policies"

Nilofar Bakhtiar
Former Chairperson, NCSW,
Former Federal Minister of
Women Development



عورت فاونڈیشن کی کیپسٹی بلڈنگ کی میں خود ایک مثال ہوں

Zakia Shahnawaz Khan
Member of the
Provincial Assembly, Punjab PML-N



"We value our ongoing collaboration with civil society institutions likeAurat Foundation that enrich and energize our shared mission"

Shaheena Sher Ali
Women Development, Minister, Sindh
Member Provincial Assembly of Sindh, PPP



"Aurat Foundation is heartbeat of Women's Unfinished Revolution for Equality "

Azma Bokhari
Minister for Information
and Culture Punjab, PML-N



"AF is a movement that gave voice to the voiceless and strength to the silenced."

Rubina Khalid
Senator,
Member of the Sanate, PPP
Chairperson BISP



"Aurat Foundation's is a Legacy of resilience, resistance, and relentless service to the women "

Tanzila Umm e Habiba
Special Assistant to
Chief Minister Sindh, PPP
Former Member of the Provincial Assembly, Sindh



"I can personally attest to the passion, commitment, and vision that drive Aurat Foundation's mission"

Rahila Hameed Khan Durrani
Minister of Education, Balochistan,
Former Speaker of the Provincial
Assembly of Balochistan, PML-N



"When we educate a girl, we empower a nation — the Aurat Foundation has lit this path for 40 years"

Ms. Wajiha Qamar
Minister of State
Ministry of Federal Education and
Professional Training
Member of National Assembly, PML-N



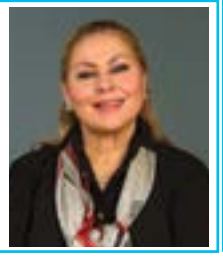
"Aurat Foundation's work has paved the way for a more just and equitable society for all"

Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi
Advisor to Chief Minister, Balochistan



"Aurat Foundation's legacy echoes in every stride towards gender justice and human rights in Pakistan"

Rabiya Javeri Agha
Chairperson,
National Commission for Human Rights

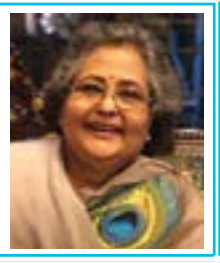


"Aurat Foundation worked for women inspite of inherent misogynistic tendencies in society"

Justice (Retd.) Shahiq Usmani
Former Judge of the Sindh
High Court,
Senior Lawyer



"It all bagan in 1990. Hariyali Conference was the turning point, when I first met Nigar"



Chandni Joshi
'Enforcer' HomeNet South Asia,
Former Regional Director of
United Nations Development Fund for
Women (UNIFEM) South Asia

"Aurat Foundation's commitment to women's human rights inspired the global women's movement "



Mahnaz Afkhami
Founder and President
Women's Learning Partnership (WLP)

"Sangat is what it is because of the inputs that it received from organisations like Aurat Foundation and its leaders"



Khushi Kabir
Head of South Asian Network of Gender
Activists and Trainers (SANGAT)

"Aurat Foundation is among the first to highlight the significance of women's political participation"



Anis Haroon
President
Board of Governers
(2024-2026)

"Aurat Foundation has always strived to remain focused on the goal posts set by its pioneers"



Dr. Aliya H. Khan
Treasurer
Board of Governers
(2024-2026)
Former Dean of Economics, QAU

"In the women's empowerment landscape of our country Aurat Foundation has carved out a unique place for itself"



Dr. Masuma Hasan
Former President, Board of Governors, AF
(2010-2023)
Former Cabinet Secretary

"The Foundation's inclusive approach merits special appreciation, particularly its consistent engagement with minority women"



Shehla Raza
Member of the
National Assembly, PPP

"The Foundation created spaces for women in governance and amplified their voices at every level"



Qazi Azmat Isa
Former President, Board of Governors, AF
President (2008-2010)
Treasurer (2002-2007)
Former CEO, PPAF

"Aurat Foundation has played a pivotal role in shaping my professional journey to advocate for women's empowerment"



Kalsoom Niaz Baloch
Member of Provincial Assembly
Balochistan, National Party

"Aurat Foundation's support to marginalized communities is a beacon of hope for countless women. "



Shagufta Malik
Member Provincial Assembly, ANP
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Parliamentarians, Youth, CSOs Call for Stronger Tabbacco Control Measures

By a Staff Reporter

Youth and Parliamentarians Call for Stronger Tobacco Control in Pakistan Islamabad, 19 August 2026: An Orientation Session with Youth Mentors and Parliamentarians was held in Islamabad under the theme "Youth for a Tobacco-Free Pakistan: From Awareness to Action." The session brought together parliamentarians, health experts, tobacco-control representatives, youth mentors, civil society and the Aurat Foundation (AF) team to discuss stronger measures to protect Pakistan's young population from tobacco and emerging nicotine products. The session was attended by Ms. Syeda Amnah Batool, MNA and Focal Person, Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP); Ms. Sabheen Ghoury, MNA and Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Information and Technology; Mr. Jamal Ahmed Khan Raisani, MNA; and Mr. Tanveer Aslam Raja, MPA. Mr. Aftab Ahmed from the Tobacco Control Cell (TCC), Prof. Dr. Mati-ur-Rehman, Senator Faisal Javed Rana and Mr. Anees Ahmed from the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (CTFK) also participated, along with youth mentors and the Aurat Foundation team including CEO Mr. Naeem Ahmed Mirza, Mr. Syed Safdar Raza Team Lead Anti-Tobacco Project, Ms. Mumtaz Mughal Director Programs and Ms. Fatima Jafry Program Officer Anti-Tobacco Project. During the session, participants stressed that tobacco control must remain a public-health priority, particularly given the increasing exposure of young people to tobacco and new nicotine products. The participants emphasized the need to move beyond awareness towards concrete policy and legislative action. A key demand emerging from the session was to increase Graphic Health Warnings (GHWs) on tobacco product packaging from the existing level of 70% to 85%.



Syeda Amnah Batool, Sabheen Ghoury, Jamal Ahmed Khan Raisani, Tanveer Aslam Raja, Aftab Ahmed, Dr. Mati ur Rehman, Anees Ahmed, along with youth mentors & AF Team.

Participants highlighted that larger and more prominent health warnings can strengthen public awareness about the harmful consequences of tobacco use and help discourage initiation among young people. The participants also called for stronger and regular increases in taxes on tobacco products as an effective public-health measure. Higher tobacco taxes can make tobacco products less affordable, particularly for young people, while contributing to reducing tobacco consumption. The session emphasized the importance of ensuring that tobacco taxation policies are effectively implemented and regularly reviewed. Parliamentarians highlighted the critical role of legislation, oversight and effective implementation of tobacco-control measures. They also emphasized the importance of engaging young people in policymaking and advocacy so that their voices and experiences are reflected in national and provincial tobacco-control strategies. The session concluded with a collective call for stronger tobacco-control policies, an increase in Graphic Health Warnings to 85%, effective tobacco taxation, stronger enforcement and meaningful youth engagement. Increase Tax on Tobacco and Nicotine products were emphasized.

Aurat Foundation Launches New Initiatives on 40th Anniversary



Aurat Card



MoU Signed for Expansion of Ali Haider General Hospital in Takht Bhai, Mardan.



Restoring Dignity:
Mental Health Clinics for
Women in Sindh

Women's Health and Empowerment: A Path to a Stronger Pakistan

Interview with Dr. Akram Sultan, Cardiologist, National Director of PILL- Interviewed by Shazia Arshad & Maria Ismail

Dr. Muhammad Akram Sultan is a cardiologist with more than 10 years of experience in cardiovascular care. He is currently serving as a Heart Specialist at Tabba Heart Institute and as the National Director for Communications at the Pakistan Institute of Living and Learning (PILL). He is also the Coordinator of the Karachi Chapter of the Pakistan Cardiac Society, Convener of the Health and Safety Committee of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI), Chief Editor of the Heartbeat e-Bulletin, and Health Advisor to the OIC Contact Group in Islamabad. Previously, Dr. Sultan served as Director of the Karachi Health Department, Medical Superintendent of Civil Hospital Karachi, Head of Sindh's Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI), and led both the COVID-19 Response Programme and the Typhoid Vaccination Programme in Sindh.



Dr. Akram Sultan

Q1 What inspired you to associate with Aurat Foundation?

It is an honour to be associated with Aurat Foundation, one of Pakistan's leading organizations working for women's rights. Women constitute nearly half of our population, yet they continue to face barriers in education, employment, healthcare, and social participation. I believe that those who understand these challenges have a responsibility to contribute to meaningful change. Given my background in public health and social services, joining Aurat Foundation provides an opportunity to use my experience to support women and contribute to a more equitable society.

Q2 How do you assess the current state of women's rights in Pakistan? What are the major challenges?

Although women make up almost half of Pakistan's population, many remain unaware of their rights or are unable to exercise them fully. Even educated women often face discrimination at home and in the workplace while balancing professional and family responsibilities. The challenges are even greater for women working in the informal sector, where they face poor legal protection, limited employment opportunities, low wages, inadequate health coverage, and little social security. Gender discrimination continues to restrict women's potential. Empowering women through education, healthcare, family planning, and employment is essential for Pakistan's social and economic development. When half the population cannot participate fully, national productivity suffers. Countries such as Bangladesh have demonstrated that investing in women leads directly to economic growth and national progress.

Q3 During your career in the health sector, what major issues affecting women have you observed?

Gender inequality often begins within the family, where girls may receive fewer opportunities in education, nutrition, and healthcare than boys. This affects their physical and mental well-being throughout life. There is also limited awareness of menstrual hygiene, reproductive health, maternal care, and family planning, contributing to Pakistan's high maternal mortality rates. Women need equal access to quality healthcare, education, information, technology, and economic opportunities. Financial independence is equally important because an educated and economically empowered woman is better equipped to make informed decisions for herself, her family, and her community.

Q4 What are Pakistan's major challenges in maternal, child, and reproductive health, and how can they be addressed?

Many young women enter marriage without sufficient knowledge of reproductive health, maternal nutrition, or safe pregnancy practices. Combined with poor hygiene and limited healthcare access, this contributes to high maternal and infant mortality. Greater investment is needed in maternal healthcare services, trained professionals, functional labour rooms, and community awareness. Lady Health Workers should be further empowered to educate families on reproductive health, nutrition, and child care. Family planning also deserves greater policy attention. Pakistan's rapid population growth places increasing pressure on national resources. Policies should encourage improvements in women's health, education, and family planning to achieve sustainable development.

Q5 Should women's health be viewed only as a medical issue, or also as a human rights issue? What reforms are needed?

Women's health is both a healthcare issue and a fundamental human rights issue. While Pakistan has constitutional protections for women, implementation remains weak. Women's health outcomes are closely linked to education, financial independence, and social status. Equal opportunities in education, employment, and decision-making can significantly improve women's well-being. Greater awareness is equally important. Women should understand their legal rights relating to inheritance, marriage, divorce, and property, while men must also be educated to respect these rights. Stronger implementation of existing laws, combined with public education, will help bridge the gap between constitutional guarantees and reality.



Dr. Akram Sultan being Interviewed by Shazia Arshad, Maria Ilsmail and Malka Khan.

Q6 How can the government, civil society, and the private sector build effective partnerships to address violence against women?

Legal reforms alone cannot eliminate honour killings, domestic violence, harassment, or other forms of gender-based violence. Public awareness, social pressure, and effective institutions are equally necessary. Women's representation in leadership and policymaking should be strengthened so that their concerns receive greater political attention. The government should establish formal partnerships with organizations such as Aurat Foundation and create empowered district-level committees with representation from women's organizations, administration, police, and social welfare departments. Women's committees should also be established at Union Council, district, provincial, and national levels to address complaints, monitor implementation, and recommend policy reforms. Clear and accessible mechanisms for reporting workplace and public harassment are equally important.

Q7 In your opinion, how important is women's economic empowerment to Pakistan's overall development?

Women's economic participation is essential

for Pakistan's development. Bangladesh, Vietnam, and Cambodia have demonstrated that investing in women's employment can transform national economies. Pakistan has abundant natural resources and a young population, but sustainable growth depends on developing its human capital. Bringing more women into the workforce would increase productivity, strengthen families, and contribute significantly to GDP. The barriers to women's participation are largely social rather than religious. Countries such as Malaysia show that women can actively participate in the workforce while maintaining their cultural and religious values. Education, skills development, financial independence, and equal opportunities are therefore essential to unlocking Pakistan's full economic potential.

Q8 As a health expert, how do you view the growing burden of heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, and other non-communicable diseases among women? How important is awareness?

Non-communicable diseases such as heart disease, hypertension, and diabetes are becoming increasingly common among women. Lifestyle changes, obesity, smoking, and lack of physical activity are major contributing factors. Marriages within close relatives also increase the risk of inherited disorders, making greater awareness about genetic health important. Women generally have some natural protection against heart disease before menopause, but unhealthy lifestyles significantly increase their risk. Maintaining a healthy weight, eating a balanced diet, exercising regularly, and avoiding tobacco are among the most effective preventive measures. Public awareness is essential because many of these diseases can be prevented through healthy lifestyle choices. Pakistan now faces many of the same challenges that developed countries experienced decades ago, and we can learn from their emphasis on prevention and health education.

Q9 You led major public health initiatives, including the Typhoid and COVID-19 vaccination programmes. What lessons from these experiences can improve the health of women and girls?

The emergence of extensively drug-resistant (XDR) typhoid highlighted the importance of preventive healthcare. Pakistan's nationwide Typhoid Conjugate Vaccine campaign demonstrated that coordinated action, supported by government and international partners, could successfully protect vulnerable populations, particularly women and children. Following the campaign, typhoid cases declined significantly and the vaccine became part of the routine immunization programme. The COVID-19 pandemic reinforced another important lesson: effective public health strategies depend not only on hospitals and technology but also on timely planning, community engagement, awareness campaigns, and preventive measures. Smart lockdowns, targeted interventions, and public cooperation proved highly effective. These experiences show that investing in prevention and community participation produces lasting health benefits.

Q10 How can Artificial Intelligence (AI) improve women's health, research, awareness, and access to healthcare?

Artificial Intelligence has enormous potential to strengthen women's healthcare. It can assist doctors in detecting diseases earlier, improve diagnostic accuracy through medical imaging, support research, and expand telemedicine services for women living in remote or underserved areas. Pakistan continues to face delays in diagnosing diseases such as breast cancer, often because social stigma discourages women from seeking timely medical examinations. AI-supported screening and awareness programmes can help address these challenges by improving early detection and expanding access to specialist care. However, AI should complement—not replace—medical professionals. Technology works best when combined with clinical expertise, allowing healthcare providers to deliver more accurate and accessible services.



Dr. Akram Sultan receiving the official pin after being selected Member National Council Excutive Committee of English Speaking Union (ESUP) from President ESUP, Mr. Irfan Qureshi

Q11 Could Artificial Intelligence also create new risks for women, such as misinformation, digital harassment, or privacy concerns? How can these risks be addressed?

While AI offers tremendous opportunities, it also presents important risks. Data privacy is a major concern, particularly when sensitive personal health information is stored digitally. Strong legal safeguards and responsible data management are essential to protect users. Another challenge is the spread of health misinformation. Many women are exposed to misleading online advertisements promoting unapproved medicines and cosmetic products that may seriously endanger their health. Governments should strengthen regulation of digital health information, enforce data protection laws, and ensure that only evidence-based medical information is promoted. Public awareness and digital literacy are equally important so that people can distinguish reliable information from misleading content.

Q12 In which areas would you like to collaborate with Aurat Foundation?

Given my experience in public health and my current role within the OIC, I believe there are valuable opportunities to strengthen Aurat Foundation's work nationally and internationally. The organization can build stronger partnerships with institutions across the Muslim world while expanding its health-related programmes. I would be pleased to contribute through policy advice, technical expertise, and strategic planning. Aurat Foundation would also benefit from developing a strong multidisciplinary think tank capable of producing evidence-based research, influencing public policy, and advocating effectively for women's health and rights.

Q13 If you were to recommend three national priorities for Aurat Foundation on women's health, what would they be?

My first priority would be comprehensive education on reproductive health, menstrual hygiene, and personal health from an early age. Secondly, family planning education and services should be strengthened to improve maternal and child health outcomes. Thirdly, greater attention should be given to preventing obesity and metabolic diseases through awareness of healthy nutrition, physical activity, and weight management. These priorities would significantly improve women's health throughout their lives.

Q14 What message would you like to share with young women, female students, and the new generation of social activists?

My message is equally relevant for young women and young men. Success requires commitment, hard work, and self-reliance. I especially encourage young women to become financially independent because economic security provides confidence, dignity, and the ability to make independent decisions. Financially empowered women are better positioned to support their families, educate their children, and contribute positively to society.

Q15 What personal or professional experience has most influenced your views on women's rights and social justice?

My family greatly influenced my views. My father was a doctor, and my sisters also pursued medicine, reinforcing my belief in the transformative power of education. Throughout my professional career, I have witnessed how education and financial independence enable women to make informed choices, overcome challenges, and participate fully in society. Women should have the confidence and freedom to study, work, travel, and make decisions independently. Empowering women ultimately strengthens families, communities, and the nation as a whole.

Q16 Finally, what message would you like to share with the readers of Aurat Foundation and the women of Pakistan?

Aurat Foundation has earned national recognition as an important voice for women's rights and should continue strengthening its institutional capacity and public influence. Government, civil society, and citizens should work closely with organizations like Aurat Foundation to expand public awareness and promote meaningful reforms. My hope is that Aurat Foundation continues to grow as a trusted institution whose recommendations are respected by policymakers at every level. By working together, we can build a Pakistan where women enjoy equal opportunities, constitutional rights, and to contribute confidently to the country's social and economic development.

INTRA-PARTY CONSULTATION ON ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY & SOCIAL INCLUSION (GESI)
In Political Party Frameworks - Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan

MQM-P Constitution sets out a framework to ensure citizens' well-being through socio-economic and political security, participatory democracy, unity among diverse groups: Farooq Sattar



Dr. Farooq Sattar, MNA and Senior MQM-P leader, presenting party's constitutional framework. delivering the opening remarks.



A group photo of the participants at the consultation.

By a Staff Reporter

Aurat Foundation under the EU-supported Pakistan Women Leaders (PWL) Project, in collaboration with UNDP and UN Women, convened an Intra-Party Consultation on Advancing Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) with MQM-P on 30 April 2026 at Peral Continental Hotel, Karachi. The consultation aimed to review the MQM-P Constitution from a GESI perspective and support the development of party-specific commitments, including a draft GESI Code of Conduct.

The consultation brought together 31 participants. The participatory methodology included plenary discussions, thematic presentations, group work, SWOT analysis and structured action planning within party structures. The consultation was attended by senior leadership of MQM-P, Shamim Ahmed Ansari Advocate, Incharge Central Labour Cell; Sikander Khatoon and Farah Sohail, MPA Sindh Assembly; Maria Sadique, Digital Media, Syeda Fara Naz, MPA, Syeda Batool Hassan, Sharjeel Baig, APMSO Department, Adnan Sarwar, Member, Disability Wing; Ms. Kishwar Zehra, former MNA and Member, Central Working Committee, Kalsoom Siddiqui, Senior Joint Secretary and other senior members of MQM-P.

The opening session featured welcome and opening remarks from AF, UNDP Pakistan and MQM-P. The Consultation was moderated by Mumtaz Mughal, Project Coordinator, AF. Opening remarks were delivered by Mr. Naeem Mirza, Executive Director, AF, Mr. Qasim Muhammad Janjua, Program Advisor, PLEDGE, UNDP Pakistan; and Ms. Sabheen Ghoury, MNA, Parliamentary Secretary for Information Technology, Incharge Digital Media Wing, MQM-P and Project Focal Person. The sessions were facilitated by Mr. Ali Imran, Parliamentary Expert.

Dr. Farooq Sattar, MNA and Senior Leader of the MQM-P presented an overview of the party's constitutional framework with a specific focus on the MQM constitution. Dr. Farooq Sattar said that the Article 4 of MQM-P Constitution sets out a framework to ensure citizens' well-being through socio-economic and political security, participatory democracy, unity among diverse groups, elimination of discrimination, legal protection for all, and support for decentralization and structural reforms. The party follows a multi-tiered and participatory governance structure designed to ensure effective representation and decision-making at all levels.

This framework reflects a commitment to decentralization and inclusive organizational democracy. He reaffirmed his commitment to advancing GE&SI within party structures, emphasizing the role of inclusive engagement and representation in strengthening democratic processes. MQM Pakistan reaffirms its highest pledge to stand for justice, dignity, and equal rights for all.

Naeem Mirza, Executive Director, AF delivered the opening remarks, highlighting the importance of integrating Gender Equality and Social Inclusion frameworks into political party constitutions. He further said that institutionalizing GESI principles within party structures can lead to more representative leadership and equitable policy outcomes, ultimately contributing to a more just and inclusive society.

Mr. Muhammad Qasim Janjua, Program Advisor, Elections and Democratic Space Pakistan Legislative, Electoral, Digital Governance and Empowerment (PLEDGE), UNDP Pakistan provided an overview of the PLEDGE project, emphasizing its strategic focus on strengthening democratic governance, electoral integrity, and inclusive political participation in Pakistan. He highlighted sustained collaboration among political parties, civil society, and development partners to institutionalize GE&SI principles within party constitutions and practices, ensuring long-term and impactful reforms.
The discussions highlighted the need to strengthen constitutional provisions related to gender equality, non-discrimination, youth and disability inclusion, and protection of marginalized groups, supported by clear institutional accountability. Participants emphasized increasing the representation of women and other underrepresented groups in party structures, strengthening women's and youth political leadership, ensuring safe and accessible political spaces, and establishing effective grievance and accountability mechanisms. Key recommendations include a clause-by-clause GESI review of the MQM-P Constitution; adoption of a GESI Code of Conduct; representation benchmarks for women, youth, persons with disabilities and minorities; transparent candidate selection mechanisms; strengthened women's and youth leadership programmes; confidential grievance redress mechanisms; an Ethics and Accountability Committee; designated GESI focal persons; and a time-bound GESI implementation action plan. Participants recommended accessibility standards for party events and greater integration of disability inclusion into the party's agenda.



Mr. Qasim M. Janjua, Program Advisor, PLEDGE, UNDP Pakistan, Ms. Sabheen Ghoury, MNA, Mr. Ali Imran, Parliamentary Expert, Ms. Kishwar Zehra, former MNA and CWC Member, Naeem Mirza, ED, AF, and Ms. Mumtaz Mughal speaking at the event

INTRA-PARTY CONSULTATION ON ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY & SOCIAL INCLUSION (GESI)
In Political Party Frameworks - National Party

NP Consultation recommends reforms to strengthen gender equality, inclusion, and internal democracy within the party

Aurat Foundation held a consultation with the National Party on 23 May 2026 at Serena Hotel, Quetta, bringing together 34 participants. Opening remarks were delivered by Mr. Zulfiqar Durrani, Head of Office, UNDP Sub-Office Balochistan and Chair of the UN Provincial Programme Team (UNPPT), Balochistan; Mr. Pullain Baloch, MNA and Member of the Central Council of the National Party; Ms. Kalsoom Niaz Baloch, Provincial Secretary for Women, Balochistan and Co-Facilitator of the Consultation; and Mr. Alludin Kilji, Resident Director, Aurat Foundation. The consultation was attended by Dr. Ishaq Baloch, Central Vice President; Mr. Miran Baloch, Central Joint Secretary, Mr. Ramzan Hazara, Member CEC; Ms. Salama Qureshi, Member CEC and Women President, Mr. Muhammad Khaliq, Ex-Provincial President, Mr. Jalil, Secretary Law, Mr. Khalid, Member CEC, Mr. Fida Hussain Dashti, Central Secretary Finance, Dr. Ghulam Muhammad, Regional Secretary and Member CEC, Mr. Dad Muhammad Baloch, Member CEC, Mr. Hanif Kakar, Provincial Vice President, Balochistan, Bibi Muqdasa, Student and Youth Committee, Mr. Siddiq Khatran, Advocate and Central Secretary Research, Ms. Noreena; Ms. Laiba Mirani, Political Activist, Mr. Aneel Gouri, Secretary Human Rights, Ms. Sadia, Education Secretary, and other members of the senior leadership. The sessions were led by parliamentary expert Ali Imran. Mr. Ali Ahmed Langau, Central Information Secretary of the National Party, presented an overview of the party's constitution, outlining its guiding principles, organizational structure, and core values. He also explained the constitutional provisions governing party functioning and decision-making, setting the context for the subsequent discussion on GESI within the party structure. In his opening remarks, Mr. Zulfiqar Durrani stressed the importance of integrating a GESI framework into political party structures to advance inclusive governance, equitable participation, and rights-based policymaking. He said that the persistent gaps underscore the need for political parties to adopt GESI-responsive frameworks, strengthen internal mechanisms, and promote the inclusive participation of women and marginalized groups in political and decision-making processes. He reaffirmed the PLEDGE Project's role as a platform for advancing inclusive and participatory democratic governance in Pakistan, and highlighted the value of sustained collaboration with political parties, civil society and other stakeholders in strengthening democratic participation at all levels. Mr. Pullain Baloch commended the consultation process and acknowledged the importance of creating spaces for dialogue and reflection on gender equality and social inclusion. Ms. Kalsoom Niaz Baloch reaffirmed her full commitment to the initiative, noting that such processes would help make the party constitution more gender-responsive, inclusive, and aligned with the principles of equality and social justice. Mr. Allaudin Khilji outlined Aurat Foundation's longstanding engagement with political parties to promote inclusive, democratic, and gender-responsive governance. In his concluding remarks, Dr. Ishaq Baloch thanked Aurat Foundation and UNDP for their technical facilitation and reaffirmed his commitment to the consultation process, assuring that the resulting recommendations would be reviewed for possible incorporation into the National Party Constitution. Mr. Dad Muhammad Baloch described the National Party as a secular, progressive, and democratic political force rooted in the aspirations of the oppressed nationalities and working people of Pakistan, and expressed his full support for the initiative's objectives and its resulting recommendations. Participants recommended reforms to strengthen gender equality, inclusion, and internal democracy within the party. Key proposals included measurable targets for women's representation in leadership bodies such as the Central Committee; financial, mentorship, and campaign support for women candidates; and grassroots outreach in rural and marginalized communities. Participants also called for political education programmes for women, youth, and marginalized groups; a review of constitutional provisions to meet international inclusion standards; and accountability mechanisms including a GESI Committee, focal points, and an Ethics and Accountability Committee to monitor implementation. Further priorities included transparent, merit-based nomination and election procedures; stronger financial and organizational capacity; youth leadership pathways; regular intra-party elections; a resource pool of women professionals; improved data and monitoring systems; and strategic partnerships with civil society, academia, and governance actors to support long-term reform.

-By a Staff Reporter



Mr. Pullain Baloch, MNA, Ms. Kalsoom Niaz Baloch, MPA, Mr. Zulfiqar Durrani, Head of Office, UNDP Sub-Office Balochistan amd Mumtaz Mughal at the Consultation


Mr. Pullain Baloch, MNA, Ms. Kalsoom Niaz Baloch, MPA, Mr. Allaudin Kilji, Resident Director, AF, Dr. Ishaq Baloch, Mr. Zulfiqar Durrani, Head of Office, UNDP Sub-Office Balochistan addressing the consultation

INTRA-PARTY CONSULTATION ON ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY & SOCIAL INCLUSION (GESI)
In Political Party Frameworks - Awami National Party

ANP Consultation Stresses Equality and Non-discrimination for all Party Members, Meaningful Participation of Women in Leadership and Decision-making

Aurat Foundation organized an Intra-Party Consultation with the Awami National Party (ANP) on its Party Constitution on 16 July 2026 at Serena Hotel, Peshawar. The consultation brought together 32 participants, including 9 women and 23 men, comprising members of the Central Executive Committee, senior party leadership, elected representatives, women leaders and other party representatives.

The consultation was attended by Mr. Hussain Shah Yousafzai, General Secretary, ANP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; Ms. Chandni Kakar, Provincial Vice President (Women), ANP Balochistan; Mr. Saqibullah Khan Chamkani, Former Member of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly and Member, Central Committee, ANP; Mr. Arsalan Khan Nazim, Provincial Spokesperson, ANP; Ms. Khadija Bibi, Provincial Vice President, ANP and Member of the Provincial Assembly, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; Dr. Noor Jehan, Central Vice President, ANP; Mr. Amer Jeet Malhotra, Central Secretary, Minority Affairs; Mr. Naseeb Khan, Member, Central Executive Committee; and Dr. Ali Hyder Khan, Central President, Doctors Wing, ANP, along with other senior party leaders and representatives.

The consultation was opened by Brig. (Retd.) Dr. Muhammad Saleem Khan, Central Secretary General, ANP; Ms. Shagufta Malik, Central Joint Secretary, ANP; and Mr. Naeem Ahmed Mirza, Executive Director, Aurat Foundation. Mr. Sangeen Khan, Advocate and Central Secretary for Legal Affairs, ANP, presented an overview of the ANP Constitution, outlining its key provisions, organizational structures and guiding principles.

In his opening remarks, Brig. (Retd.) Dr. Muhammad Saleem Khan appreciated AF, UNDP, UN Women and EU for convening the consultation and reaffirmed that democracy, equality, social inclusion, non-violence and political empowerment are central to ANP's political vision and the legacy of Bacha Khan. He emphasized that these principles should be reflected not only in the party's political discourse but also in its internal structures. He highlighted the need to strengthen women's meaningful participation beyond numerical representation. He also emphasized the importance of creating meaningful opportunities for youth, persons with disabilities, religious and ethnic minorities, workers and other underrepresented groups to participate in party affairs and decision-making.



A group photo of the participants at the consultation.

Dr. Saleem Khan confirmed that recommendations emerging from the consultation would be referred to the relevant party forums for consideration, including feasible proposals for future constitutional amendments and institutional improvements. He also welcomed continued engagement with Aurat Foundation and other stakeholders to support evidence-informed and sustainable reforms within the party.

Participants recommended the development and adoption of a GESI-responsive Code of Conduct applicable at all levels of the ANP. The consultation called for:

- Equality and non-discrimination for all party members.
- Meaningful participation of women in leadership and decision-making.
- Inclusion of youth, persons with disabilities, minorities, workers and other underrepresented groups.
- A safe, respectful and harassment-free party environment.
- Transparent and inclusive elections, nominations and appointments.
- Confidential complaint mechanisms to address harassment, discrimination and exclusion.
- Regular GESI training and awareness for party leaders and members.

The consultation concluded with a commitment to review the recommendations and consider feasible reforms to the ANP Constitution and organizational mechanisms. Mr. Hussain Shah Yousafzai, General Secretary, ANP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, emphasized that GESI commitments should be translated into practical, measurable and sustained action through clear institutional responsibilities and systematic follow-up at the central, provincial, district and local levels.

By a Staff Reporter






Brig. (Retd.) Dr. M. Saleem Khan, Central Secretary General, ANP, Shagufta Malik, Central Joint Secretary, ANP, Mr. Sangeen Khan, Advocate and Mr. Hussain Shah Yousafzai, General Secretary, ANP KP, addressing the consultation






Naeem Mirza, ED, AF, Mumtaz Mughal, Director Programmes, AF, Ms. Chandni Kakar, Vice President, Balochistan, ANP, Mr. Ali Imran, Parliamentary Expert speaking at the consultation

INTRA-PARTY CONSULTATION ON ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY & SOCIAL INCLUSION (GESI)
In Political Party Frameworks - Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf

PTI Consultation Reaffirms Commitment to Mainstream Women, Youth and Marginalised Groups in Politics



A group photo of the participants with Amir Dogar at the end of opening session of the consultation.



A group photo of the participants with Salman Akram Raja at the conclusion of the consultation.

Aurat Foundation held a consultation with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on 19 August 2026 at the Marriott Hotel, Islamabad. The Intra-Party Dialogue on the party's Constitution under the EU-supported Pakistan Women Leaders Project, a joint initiative of UNDP and UN Women. The consultation brought together 52 participants (18 women and 34 men), ensuring representation of youth, religious and ethnic minorities, alongside senior party leadership and office bearers.

The Intra-Party Consultation aimed to undertake a participatory review of the PTI Constitution through a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) lens, identifying gaps and opportunities to strengthen gender-responsive, inclusive, and democratic internal party governance. The consultation provided a platform for dialogue on party-specific GESI commitments and a Code of Conduct, incorporating the perspectives of women, youth, persons with disabilities, and religious, ethnic, and gender minorities. It also sought to develop preliminary GESI principles and commitments to inform the formulation of a party-specific Code of Conduct and strengthen inclusive internal party practices.





Amir Dogar, Chief Whip, MNA. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Shaukat Basra, Deputy Central Joint Secretary, PTI, Salman Akram Raja, Secretary General, PTI at the consultation

PTI's senior leadership including Salman Akram Raja, Secretary General, Amir Dogar, Chief Whip, Senator Falak Naz Chitrali; Senator Robina Naz; Senator Khurram Zeeshan, Senator Gurpreet Singh, Senator Zeeshan Khanzada; Shaukat Basra, Deputy Central Joint Secretary, Raja Tanveer Aslam, MPA Punjab, Shamin Aftab, former MPA, Punjab, Khalid Yousaf Chaudhry, Legal Counsel for Imran Khan and Member, Core Committee , Ishfaq Paracha and . Mussadiq Ghuman, Member, Central Core Committee; Faisal Javed Khan (former Senator), Sardar M. Kakar, Incharge Huma Rights Winge PTI, Ravi Kumar, former MPA, President Youth Wing, Mansoor Hassan, former MPA KP, Nouman Mughal, Secretly Disability Wing Punjab, Zulikha, Women Wing Balochistan, Lubna Adil, Secretary Information Cell, Ali Imran (Parliamentary Expert); Qasim Janjua, Governance Advisor and Programme Head, UNDP); Naeem Mirza Executive Director, Aurat Foundation, Mumtaz Mughal, Director, Aurat Foundation, Safdar Raza; Shafi Agha; Sumaira Gul; and other distinguished political and social activists participated in the consultation

Salman Akram Raja in his concluding remarks at the end of the consultation, appreciated Aurat Foundation and its development partners for initiating this important dialogue on the party's constitution, describing it as a appropriate and valuable exercise to strengthen PTI's constitutional and organizational framework. He spoke of PTI's long-standing struggle for democracy in Pakistan and its efforts to bring youth and women into the political mainstream,

(Continued on Page 19)



Senator Falak Naz Chitrali speaking at the consultation.



Khalid Yousaf Chaudhry, Advocate presenting the PTI constitution



Faisal Javed Khan speaking at the consultation.



Senator Khurram Zeeshan speaking at the consultation.



Amir Dogar, MNA PTI with his collegues.



Senator Rubina Naz addressing the consultation



Senator Gurpreet Singh addressing the consultation



Raja Tanveer Aslam, MPA, Punjab, addressing the consultation



Naeem Mirza, ED, AF speaking at the consultation



Mumtaz Mughal, Director Programmes, AF speaking at the event



Muhammad Qasim Janjua, Program Advisor PLEDGE, UNDP speaking at the consultation



Ali Imran, Parliamentary Expert speaking at the consultation

Interview with Asma Shirazi,Senior Journalist
Interviewer: Mehak Fatima Jafri

Q1 What does your daily routine look like, and how do you manage to spend time with your family despite such a busy schedule?

We work until late at night because a journalist never really sleeps. After sending my children to school, I spend about one to one and a half hours reading various national and international newspapers, while also sharing important articles with my program team. Around noon, we hold a conference call with the entire team to discuss the day's program. Then I work on vlogs and attend various meetings at the office. Around 5 p.m., we officially begin preparing for the program. After the program ends, we hold another meeting to plan for the next day. Journalism never stops, even on weekends. However, I make sure to spend time with my children and family, whether at my parents' home or with my in-laws. Sometimes it becomes very challenging, but by the grace of Allah, everything works out.

Q2 If you had not become a journalist, which profession would you have chosen?

(Laughing) Even if I had not become a journalist, I would still have been a journalist. Every child has certain traits that indicate their future path. From an early age, you can often see what field a child is naturally inclined toward. Since my school and college days, I loved participating in speech competitions and debates. It was always in my blood. I had decided from childhood that I wanted to become a journalist, and that's exactly what happened.

Q3 What do you think is the biggest challenge facing journalism in Pakistan today?

The biggest challenges are censorship and fake news. Journalists have always faced pressure, whether from governments, the establishment, different groups, or various mafias. Today, however, fake news has become the greatest challenge. It has become so powerful that it often overshadows factual reporting. Personal attacks, intimidation, unnecessary harassment, and online abuse all contribute to a form of self-censorship, where journalists are unable to express themselves freely because of pressure. As a result, restrictions on journalists continue to increase, and truthful reporting risks becoming a thing of the past.

Q4 What measures are necessary to curb the spread of fake news?

The best way to counter fake news is to ensure that accurate and verified information becomes the primary part of news reporting. Greater public access to information is essential. Once people have access to authentic information, fake news will gradually lose its influence. News should be based on facts, not wishes or narratives. Unfortunately, access to information remains limited. If verified information consistently reaches the public, fake news can be effectively controlled.

Q5 As a journalist, what has been the most difficult reporting challenge of your career?

Every period has had its own challenges, but during General Pervez Musharraf's era, restrictions were imposed on me, and I was prevented from reporting. Every government has presented its own difficulties. During Imran Khan's government, I faced severe online harassment because of the strength of its social media presence. What the government and the establishment did to me during that time is something I can never forget. One of the most difficult aspects of journalism is when your verified reports and factual information are deliberately distorted. When facts are misrepresented and propaganda is used to make the truth appear false, it creates immense challenges. That was a particularly difficult period in my career.

Q6 In the current environment, do you think girls and women should still choose journalism as a profession?

Absolutely. Journalism is not an impossible or overly difficult profession. However, it is unfortunate that over the past three to four years, female journalists have been subjected to extensive character assassination. As a result, the number of women entering journalism has declined significantly. The major reasons include online harassment, bullying, character attacks, and misinformation. Pressure from different quarters on social media has forced many women to limit their participation. This has discouraged many young women from pursuing journalism as a career, which is deeply concerning. Nevertheless, women should not lose courage. They must continue to express themselves. In the past, very few women worked in journalism, whereas today women make up more than half of the workforce in many media organizations. Unfortunately, a recent wave has discouraged many young women from joining the profession. I strongly believe women should pursue journalism. It is a challenging profession, and women have always shown remarkable resilience in facing challenges. My advice is that women should enter journalism and establish themselves in the field.

> **"Regrettably, a recent wave has discouraged many young women from joining the profession. I strongly believe women should pursue journalism despite all challenges".**

Q7 In your opinion, how strong is the role of journalism in influencing policymaking in Pakistan's Parliament?

It certainly plays an important role. Journalists do not make policies themselves, but their reporting provides the context on which policies are often developed. Pakistani journalism has consistently played a constructive, reform-oriented, and positive role in policymaking, whether regarding democracy, constitutional development, human rights, freedom of expression, terrorism, or other national challenges. Journalism has made a meaningful contribution to public policy and national discourse.



Asma Shirazi, Senior Anchor Person

Q8 Women are generally elected to Parliament through reserved seats. As a woman yourself, do you think women should have greater opportunities to contest general seats?

Absolutely. I believe all political parties should move beyond relying solely on reserved quotas and instead commit to nominating a significant number of women on general seats. There is a clear difference between women who are elected through direct competition and those who enter Parliament through reserved seats, and that distinction should not exist. Political parties should encourage women to contest general elections so they can become part of Parliament through direct public support.

Q9 Where do you see the future of Pakistani journalism over the next few years? Are there any positive changes you hope to see?

At present, the future of journalism in Pakistan is still not very encouraging, and I believe it may become even more challenging. However, journalism itself also needs to evolve. The verification of news must remain a top priority. Instead of relying on "he said, she said" reporting, we need to focus more on investigative journalism and adopt a broader regional perspective. Pakistan's foreign policy should also be viewed through the lens of regional dynamics. Traditional politics is often covered through traditional journalism, and that approach needs to change. Only then can we ensure a more transparent, credible, and professional media landscape.



Asma Shirazi with Mehak Fatima

Milestones of Struggle & Success

Strengthening social capital and safeguarding Women's rights, peace, and democracy in Pakistan

The Founders of Aurat Foundation



Shahla Zia

1947 - 2005

Shahla Zia was a renowned human rights activist, one of the pioneers of women's rights movement and Women's Action Forum in early 80s, and a distinguished lawyer specializing in criminal and constitutional law. She devoted her energies to ensuring women's legal and political rights in Pakistan for almost 35 years, both as a practicing lawyer,a committedactivist. Before establishing Aurat Foundation in 1986, jointly with Nigar Ahmad, she helped set up AGHS, the first ever all female legal firm in Pakistan, along with Asma Jehangir, Hina Jilani and Gul Rukh Rehman. During her 19-year tenure in Aurat Foundation,she contributed in launching of several national campaigns and programmes for women's social and political empowerment. Shahla Zia's public interest litigation before the Supreme Court (Shehla Zia vs. WAPDA - PLD 1994 SC 693) wherein for the first time an apt definition was given to "life", in the realm of Fundamental rights in the Constitution of Pakistan, has received world- wide acclaim and become a global legal precedent. Her input to various national reports and plans and her work on women's representation in legislatures through reserved seats, reform of Muslim Family Laws Ordinances, repeal of discriminatory laws, enactment of law on 'honour' killings inspired a whole generation of decision-makers, law-makers, women politicians, lawyers, researchers and activists in Pakistan to work dedicatedly for the rights of women. She was a member of the Commission of Inquiry on Women, set up by the federal government in 1994. The Government of Pakistan awarded her 'Sitara-e-Imtiaz' posthumously in 2005, for her services to women of Pakistan. She was also one of the 1000 women proposed for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005.

Nigar Ahmed

1940 - 2017

Nigar Ahmed was a distinguished economist, social scientist, human rights activist and a visionary leader of the women's rights movement in Pakistan. She made an epoch making contribution, as a central figure of the rights-based movement, to the birth and development of social capital in Pakistan by creating citizens' groups at the grassroots level, and brought about a 'silent revolution' for women. She has worked tirelessly for nearly 31 years for the empowerment of Pakistani women, as the founder Executive Director of the Aurat Publication and Information Service Foundation. Under her stewardship, Aurat (Women) Foundation has taken up a range of issues, from mobilizing women for national and local government elections to generating debate across the country about women's political and economic empowerment and issues relating to peace and democracy. While pursuing a career in academia she taught economics for 16 years at the faculty of the Quaid-e-Azam University in Islamabad and was drawn into the struggle of Pakistani women against the anti-women policies of Zia-ul-Haq. She was a member of the Women Action Forum for two years (1981-1983) before founding Aurat Foundation. Nigar has researched the work of women in the informal sector, and organized national conferences for peasant women, as well as radio programmes to educate them on health and agricultural issues. She also served as a Member of the National Commission of the Status of Women (NCSW) during its first term in 2003. Nigar was awarded Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Life Time Achievement Award, 2018, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Human Rights Award in 2010, and was proposed as one of the 1000 women proposed for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005, for her services to women.



INTRODUCTION

This compendium of Aurat Foundation's ideas, dreams, and actions spanning over four decades reflects the ethos of a true labour of love. It is rooted in collective efforts undertaken alongside countless staff members, volunteers, legislators, social and political workers, ordinary citizens, institutions and government departments, media professionals, and legal, medical, and civil society representatives. Together, they have shared a common vision, collective understanding, and enduring aspirations for women's empowerment, democracy, peace, social justice, and a clean environment.

At the heart of this journey lies a simple yet powerful conviction: no one is left behind. Thank you!

1986

The door to new horizons opens

On the right, there is the first name plate of the Aurat Foundation on the small door of the main entrance to the First Office of the Aurat Foundation at the LDA Flats on Lawrence Road in Lahore, opened in 1986. It was a two-room office. Nigar used to sit here in a small cabin. Shahla was based in Islamabad, in an office in F6. From a two-room office and around 10-12 staff, Aurat Foundation grew to a national organisation, having offices in Federal and Provincial capitals and, presence in almost all districts of Pakistan with the largest community outreach, and becoming part of local, regional and global groups, networks and paltforms.

We are presenting Aurat Foundation's journey spanned over forty years on next pages. The journey started by a small team was participated with commitment, zeal and consistency by generations to come for a common goal: women's empowerment. Founded in 1986, Aurat Foundation (AF) is a national, non-profit, non-governmental organization, founded by economist Nigar Ahmad and lawyer Shahla Zia. AF is committed to create widespread awareness and commitment for a just, democratic and caring society in Pakistan, where women and men are recognized as equals, with the right to lead their lives with self-respect and dignity. Over the last 40 years, Aurat Foundation has come to be recognized nationally and internationally as one of the leading institutions creating, facilitating and strengthening civil society groups and networks for promoting trust and collaboration among citizens to mobilize public pressure for women's empowerment and policy reform in their interests.



Aurat Foundation Establishes

Leading the Change

Aurat Foundation is celebrating its 40th Anniversary this year, 2026. During the month of February it launched this book in Karachi on Pakistani Women's Day. This book showcases stories of success where women brought changes in their own lives and lives of other women in communities and cross-section of society. This coffee table book, consisting of nearly 500 pages and an 18-minute documentary reflecting AF stories of achievements, barriers and successes. The stories depict deep commitment amd unwavering courage of thousands of women rights activists fighting against discriminatory laws against women, retrogressive intepretations of religion, as well as, reclaiming women's democratic, social and political rights.

1987

- Aurat Foundation's First Information Scoping Workshop

1988

Constitutional Provision on Reserved Seats for Women Lapses

- Aurat Foundation Launches Historic Movement for Women's Reserved Seats for 14 Years

- Aurat Foundation opens office in Karachi

1989

- Launch of "Aurat" Magazine



1990

- Aurat Foundation opens office in Islamabad
- World Summit for Children



1991

- First National Conference of Peasant Women in Pakistan, 1991

1992

- First South Asian conference on Women and Environment

1993

- Aurat Foundation opens office in Peshawar and Quetta
- Radio Listening Centres Formed

1994

- Ms. Shahla Zia vs. Wapda, PLD 1994 (SC 693)

1995

- Citizens Action Committees (CACs) Formed



1996

- Field Visits to Form and Consolidate CACs



1997

- A Political Role for Civil Society Organisations Defined.

1998

- Activities under Political Education Programme & CACs.



1999



2000

- Citizens' Campaign for Women's Representation in Local Government 2000-2001 (CCWR)



2001

- AF off to training on Local Government System and Challenges



2002



2003

- Defining the Political Environment with Legislators and Political Parties



2004



2005

- Shahla Zia passes away

2006

- Remembering Shahla Zia on First Death Anniversary

2007

- Asma Jahangir Leading a "Save Judiciary" Rally

2008

• A seminar on the report "Gender-based Critique of Election 2008 Manifestos of Key Political Parties" authored by Ms. Naheed Azizi, in Islamabad. The session was chaired by Dr. Maruma Hasan



2009

• GBV incidents – from Numbers to Policy Advocacy



2010

• Events on International Women's Day



2011

Women Rally Demands to demand of the Senators to pass the I Anti-Women Practices (Criminal Law Amendment) Bill, 2011



2012

• SANWED South Asian Consultative Workshop on 'Mainstreaming Rights of 'Widows and Single Women in Public Policy'



2013

• Celebrating the Passage of Pro-Women Legislations in Punjab Assembly



2014

• President Mamnoon Hussain for Changing Social Mindset



2015

• Women Win Right to Vote after 49 years in Lower Dir



2016

• Launching Ceremony of ZEWER of 'Women Leaders' Struggle



2017

Honouring Women's Leadership: Chandani Joshi Reflects on Nigar Ahmad's Pioneering Legacy at Aurat Foundation



2018

• Celebrations of Historical Legislation of Sindh Home-based Workers Act, 2018



2019

• Sharing Progress for Women's Empowerment



2020

• Peshawar, Okara, Quetta, Sibi, Karachi and Sukkur: Women Respond to Female-oriented Challenges of COVID-19.



2021

• Paving the Ways - Providing the Resources to enhance skills.



2022

• National Group of 75 Women Peace Architects formed.



2023

• National Group of 75 Women Peace Architects formed.



2024

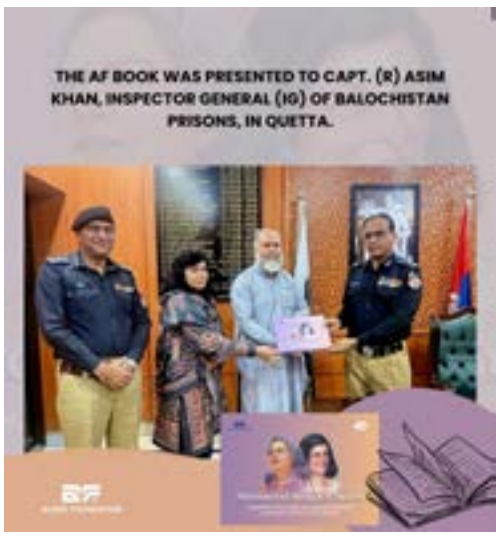
• AF Moves IHC on Violation of 5% Ticket Allocation to Women.

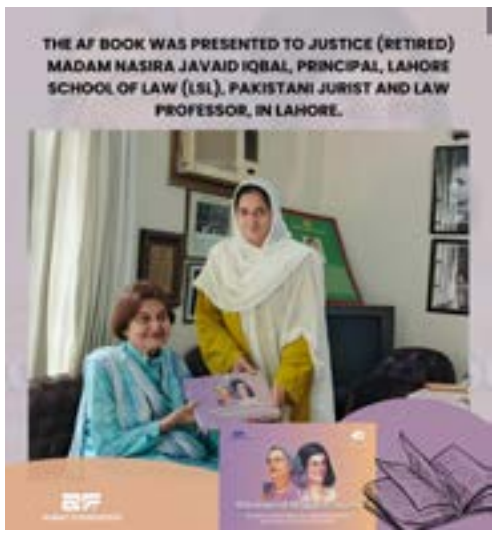
2025

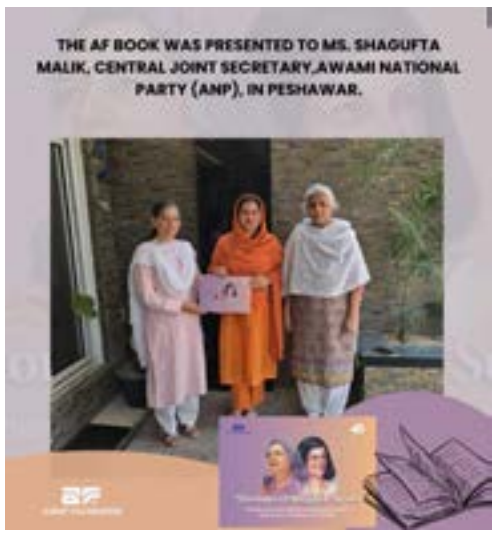
• Training & Rehab Programme for Juvenile Inmates in Quetta Jail.



Aurat Foundation's Book presented to Friends, Partners and Social Activists



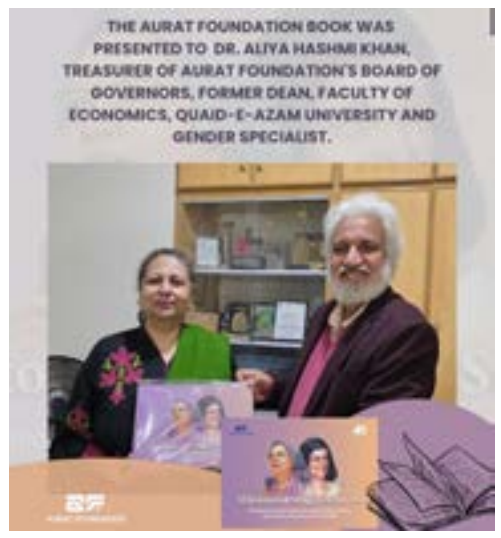




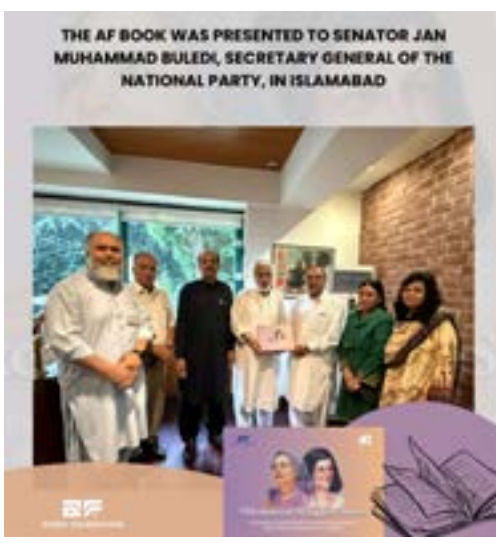


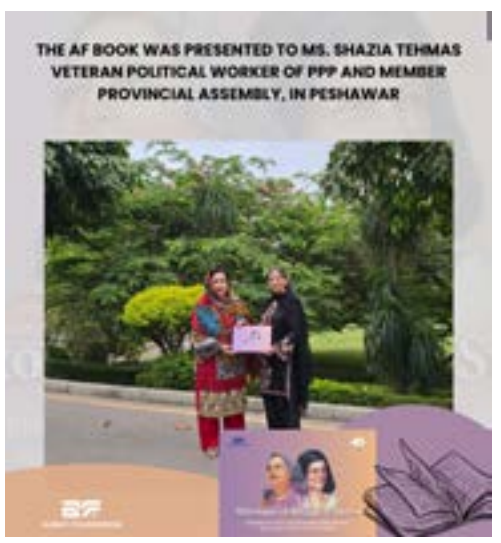




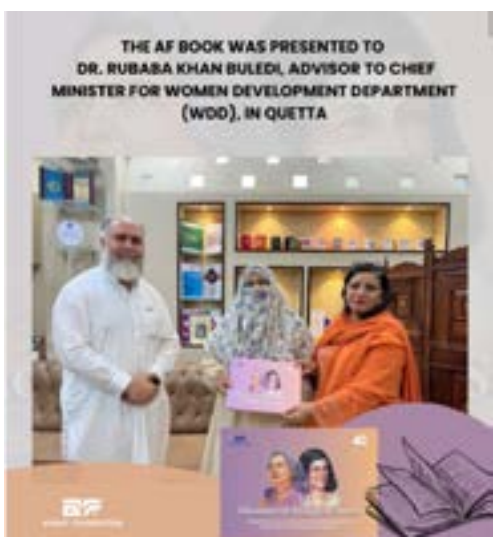




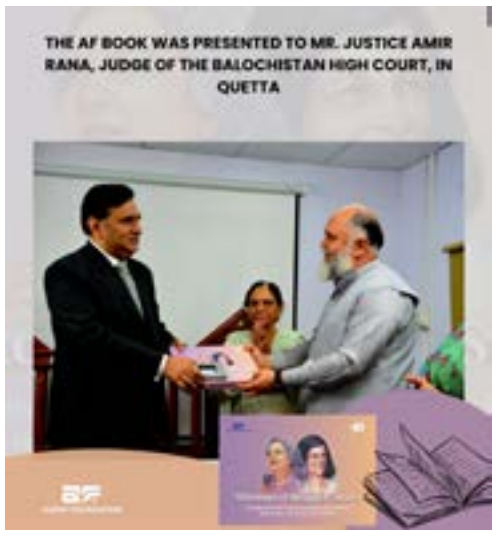


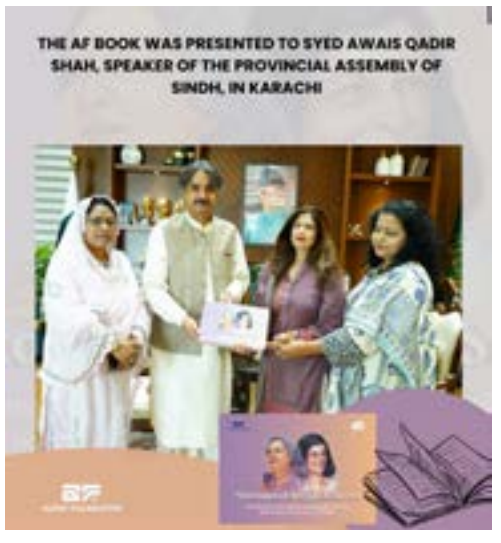








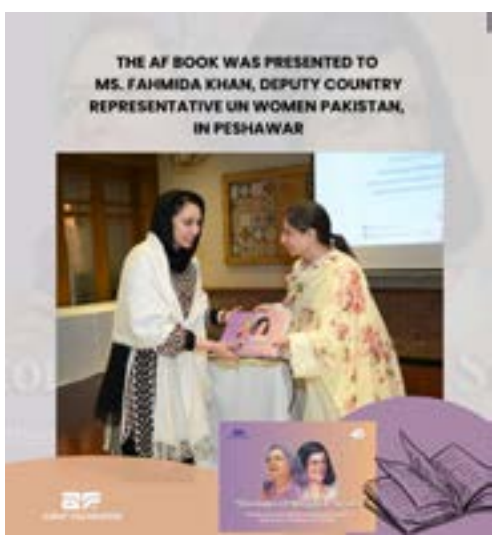


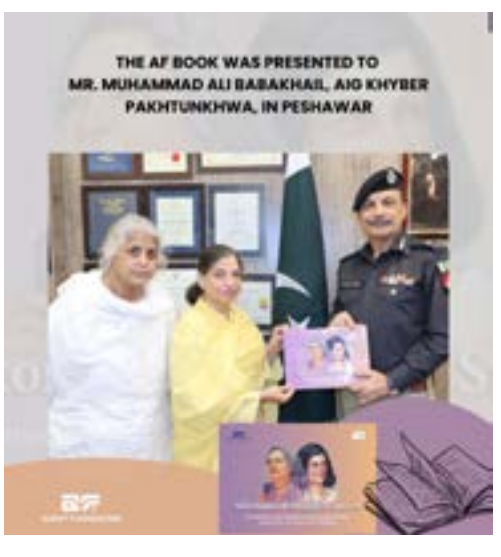


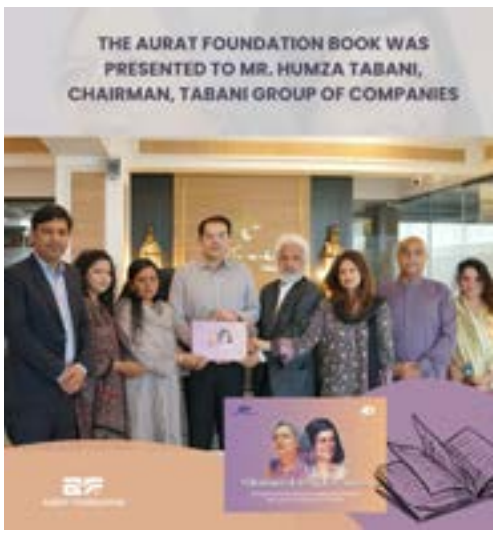




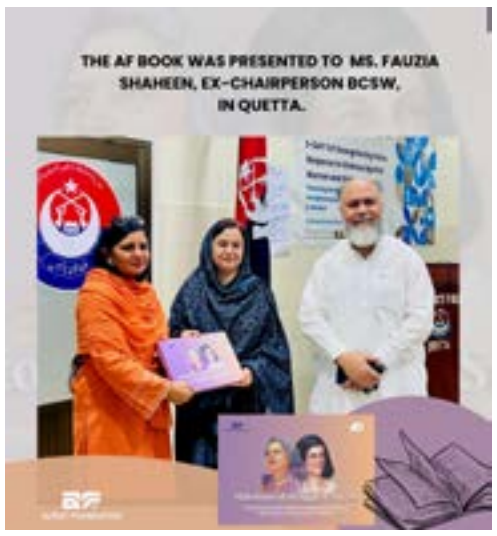




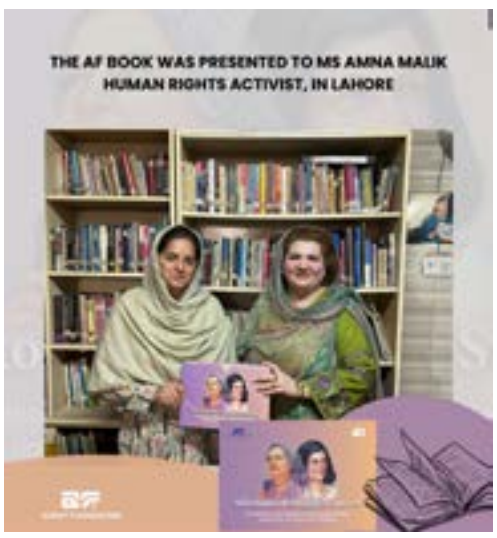


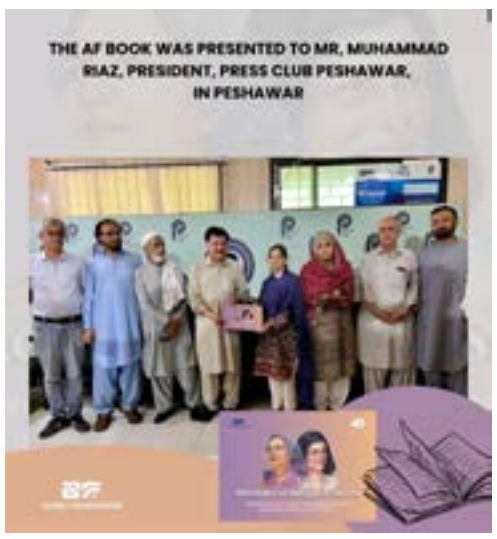
















AF Signs MoUs with Public and Private Bodies



Aurat Foundation, Community Development Foundation (CDF), and KREATE IDEAS TO ELEVATE STORIES (KITES) marked an important step toward strengthening women's economic participation through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for strategic collaboration on women's economic empowerment, global entrepreneurship, and leadership development. The MoU was signed by Mr. Naeem Ahmed Mirza, Executive Director of Aurat Foundation, Ms. Mariam Khan, Executive Director of CDF and Colonel Asad Mehmood, CEO of KITES.



Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) Signed Between Inspectorate General of Prisons, Government of Balochistan and Aurat Foundation. On 20 July 2026, an MoU was signed at the Office of the Inspector General of Prisons, Government of Balochistan to strengthen collaboration on prison reforms, access to justice, rehabilitation, and the protection of prisoners' rights under the EU-supported project "Trans-Provincial Intervention for Reformative Capacity-Building, Enabling Access to Justice and Advocacy through Outreach Programmes with Actors in the Criminal Justice System."



Aurat Foundation (AF) and Pakistan Institute of Living and Learning (PILL) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish a collaborative partnership aimed at promoting awareness regarding breast cancer, mental health and psychosocial well-being. Under the agreement, both organizations will work together to implement mental health awareness campaigns, provide psychosocial support services, conduct capacity-building and training programmes. They both will work together to implement community-based initiatives to strengthen the well-being and resilience of communities.



Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Banking Services Corporation, Quetta, marking a significant step towards promoting financial inclusion and women's economic empowerment across Balochistan. The MoU was formally signed by Mr. Allauddin Achakzai, Chief Manager, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP-BSC) Quetta, and Mr. Allauddin Khilji, Resident Director, Aurat Foundation Balochistan.



Aurat Foundation (AF) and Capital Diagnostic Centre (CDC) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen collaboration in the provision of healthcare services. This partnership aims to enhance access to quality healthcare facilities and promote well-being through mutual cooperation.



A MoU is signed between MRCs and AF regarding Reintegration of Returnees (RoR). Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs), under the framework of the Reintegration of Returnees (RoR) Project, are mandated to facilitate the sustainable reintegration of returnees in Pakistan through the provision of reintegration services, including information and counselling, referral pathways, case management, coordination of assistance and linkages with relevant public and private service providers.

PTI Consultation

(Continued from Page 13)

noting that this commitment is also reflected in the party's constitution, and shared PTI's vision and ongoing contribution to strengthening democratic institutions. Amir Dogar acknowledged Aurat Foundation's longstanding efforts to advance women's political participation in Pakistan. He emphasized the importance of the consultation at a critical time when PTI is reviewing and considering amendments to its party constitution. During the Consultation, he highlighted that PTI has awarded party tickets to women party workers to contest general seats. While opening of Intra Party Consultation, Naeem Mirza, Executive Director, Aurat Foundation, highlighted the importance of women's meaningful inclusion in political parties' decision-making structures. On behalf of UNDP, opening remarks were delivered by Muhammad Qasim Janjua provided an overview of the PLEDGE project. He highlighted sustained collaboration among political parties, civil society, and development partners to institutionalize GE&SI principles within party constitutions and practices, ensuring long-term and impactful reforms.

Khalid Yousaf Chaudhry, Legal Counsel for Imran Khan provided an overview of the party's constitutional provisions relating to membership, women's participation, minorities, and the inclusion and representation of vulnerable groups during the the Intra-Party Consultation of the PTI Constitution. Shaukat Basra, Deputy Central Joint Secretary, PTI, recognized the importance of the consultation and appreciated AF for convening this timely and constructive dialogue with PTI leadership. Senator Falak Naz Chitrali shared PTI's vision for advancing women's political empowerment and meaningful participation in political processes. She emphasized that the party constitution serves as a legally binding framework and should provide clear and enforceable commitments to equality and inclusion. Senator Khurram Zeeshan acknowledged the need to create safer, more respectful, and inclusive political spaces for marginalized and underrepresented groups within PTI's organizational structures.



A group photograph of participants of the Provincial Women's Conference in Quetta.

Promoting a Gender-responsive Justice System is Need of the Hour: Ghazala Gola

Aurat Foundation, with the financial and technical support of UN Women and the Embassy of Germany, organized the Provincial Women's Conference titled "Achievements, Lessons Learnt and Way Forward" under the project "Improving Gender Parity for Strengthening Gender-Responsive Justice in Pakistan (Balochistan)." The conference brought together parliamentarians, government officials, justice sector representatives, development partners, academia, and civil society to reflect on the project's progress and future direction. Ms. Ghazala Gola, Deputy Speaker, Provincial Assembly of Balochistan, attended as the Chief Guest, while Members of the Provincial Assembly and representatives from Aurat Foundation, UN Women, and key provincial institutions participated. The event highlighted collective efforts to strengthen gender-responsive justice systems and improve women's access to justice across Balochistan.

-by a Staff Reporter

Energy & Environment Action Summit 2026



Aurat Foundation's representatives, Muneezeh Khan & Malka Khan participated in the Energy & Environment Action Summit 2026 which commenced on 7th June 2026 in Karachi, bringing together policymakers, experts, development practitioners, and environmental advocates to discuss solutions for a sustainable and resilient future. Aurat Foundation participated as the Knowledge Partner, contributing to critical conversations on climate action, water security, sustainable development, and environmental resilience.

Experts Debate Public and Mental Health Priorities

A productive and insightful meeting was held on 11 June 2026 in Islamabad with Dr. M. Akram Sultan, Advisor Health and Member, OIC Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH), along with Dr. Noor ul Zaman, National Director of the Mental Health Household Survey at the Pakistan Institute of Living and Learning.



AF team after the meeting with Dr. Akram Sultan, Director, PILL, at the COMSTECH, Islamabad

Tobacco Control Program



CTFK and AF delegation with Ms. Sabheen Ghouri

A delegation comprising Dr. Maheen Malik, Regional Director, CTFK Asia, Mr. Anees Ahmed, Country Representative, CTFK Pakistan, Ms. Mumtaz Mughal, Director Programmes, AF, accompanied by Mr. Safdar Raza and Ms. Mehak Fatima Jafry visited Ms. Sabheen Ghouri,MNA, Parliamentary Secretary for Ministry of IT & Telecom on 11 August 2026 in Islamabad. The dialogue focused on the implementation of tobacco control laws and how the tech sector can support health advocacy by leveraging digital platforms and awareness campaigns.



Director Programmes Greeting Message

Dear Friends and Partners,

On behalf of Aurat Foundation, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to all our friends and partners, sympathizers in Pakistan and abroad on the launch of AFeye, Aurat Foundation's e-newsletter, marking our 40th Anniversary. It is a new initiative of Aurat Foundation's journey of advancing equality, justice, peace and democracy, which we began forty years back in 1986. I would also like congratulate to the AFeye Editorial Team for this important action, which will amplify our collective voices and showcase the impact of our work, while we have already entered the new digital world.

I hope, as we celebrate four decades of our transformative mission, this e-newsletter will capture the stories of success and challenges behind women's efforts in breaking barriers, communities claiming their rights and partnerships creating lasting impact. Every achievement featured here reflects the dedication of our staff, partners and communities, who continue to champion equality and social justice. Together, let us continue shaping a Pakistan where every voice is heard, every right is protected and no one is left behind.

Happy 40 years to all.

Mumtaz Mughal

Issue No. 01 AURAT FOUNDATION E- MAGAZINE July 2026

AF EYE

Patron-in-Chief: Naeem Mirza AF Founded by: Nigar Ahmad - Shahla Zia

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Aurat Foundation makes available emerging discussions and debates related to the organization's areas of work. The views presented here reflect those of the author and do not necessarily always reflect the views of the organization.