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Pakistani Women Hope for Change after Malala Nobel Win



Saima Bibi was just 13 when she was married off to settle a debt of honor, a common custom in Pakistan's northwest Swat Valley where Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai grew up.

A top student who got the highest marks in class, Bibi was forced to drop out of school and give up her dreams of an education.

Now aged 22, she says Malala has given her the "courage" to speak up to her husband and in-laws to try to go back to school, and is determined her four children will finish their studies.

"When Malala's picture was being printed in the newspapers, everybody in my family used to say it's a conspiracy against Islam. But I liked her from the beginning," she told AFP on a visit to the doctor in Mingora, Swat's main town.

Though derided by some for sullyng Pakistan's reputation abroad, Malala's award has been widely hailed by the country's political leaders and the press.

Read more:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/150849-pakistani-women-hope-for-change-after-malala-nobel-win>

Cosmopolitan New Afghan First Lady Backs French Veil Ban



Afghanistan's cosmopolitan new first lady has backed France's controversial ban on the niqab, comparing the full veil to "blindness" as she prepares to campaign for more respect for women in her conservative adopted homeland.

Rula Ghani shocked Afghan observers earlier this year when she appeared with her husband during the country's presidential campaign, a rare example of a political wife sharing the spotlight.

Now the Lebanese-American of Christian heritage is set to carve out a role for herself as the patriarchal and deeply Muslim nation's first high-profile first lady.

In an interview with Agence France Presse at the presidential palace, Ghani, who speaks five languages, reminisced about her time as a student at the prestigious Sciences Po university in Paris which she attended during the late 1960s.

Wearing a vintage Hermes scarf over her hair, she recalled in fluent French that "all the young women at Sciences Po had their headscarves which they would wear as they stepped out of school".

Read more:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/153437-cosmopolitan-new-afghan-first-lady-backs-french-veil-ban>

Weather forecasters predict better services for women



Meteorologists from around the world are meeting with women's rights activists and aid workers in Geneva to develop climate and weather services geared specifically to women.

The Nov. 5-7 conference will also discuss how to attract and promote more female scientists in meteorology and hydrology.

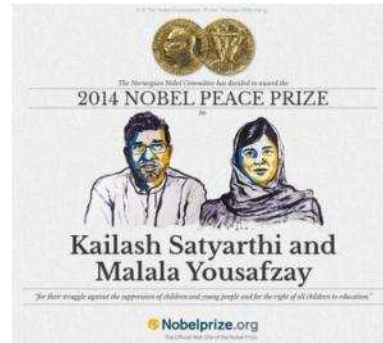
Michel Jarraud, secretary-general of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), said progress had been made in improving weather forecasts and climate services to protect lives and livelihoods.

"But if we are to help communities cope with long-term climate change and the anticipated increase in hazards like floods and heat waves, then we need to do more to reach out to women with gender-sensitive services," he said.

Read more:

http://www.trust.org/item/20141105084703-1dkyn/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=AlertNet+Expresso+Nov+5+2014&utm_content=AlertNet+Expresso+Nov+5+2014+CID_5a37c8ad0d8c547c53ae52c324be32cb&utm_source=Campaign%20Monitor&utm_term=Weather%20forecasters%20predict%20better%20services%20for%20women

Malala Yousafzai and Kailash Satyarthi win 2014 Nobel peace prize



Pakistani teenager and Indian children's rights activist beat Edward Snowden, Chelsea Manning, the Pope and Vladimir Putin to the prestigious prize.

Malala Yousafzai, the Pakistani teenage education campaigner shot on school bus in 2012 by a Taliban gunman, has won the 2014 Nobel peace prize.

Malala won along with Kailash Satyarthi, an Indian children's rights activist.

The two were named winner of the £690,000 (8m kronor or \$1.11m) prize by the chairman of the Nobel committee - Norway's former prime minister Thorbjørn Jagland - on Friday morning.

Speaking after finishing the school day at Edgbaston High School for Girls, in Birmingham, Malala said: "My message to children all around the world is that they should stand up for their rights."

She added: "I felt more powerful and more courageous because this award is not just a piece of metal or a medal you wear or an award you keep in your room.

Read more:

<http://www.wluml.org/news/malala-yousafzai-and-kailash-satyarthi-win-2014-nobel-peace-prize>

Turkey's First Ladies & The Headscarf Controversy



The concept of the "first lady" is unusual for Turkey. This changed in 2007 when the 11th president, Abdullah Gul, and his wife, Hayrinnusa Gul, moved into the presidential palace. In an earlier period, presidential wives were passive, virtually invisible presences, limited to presidential palace protocol, and there was no social interest in their lifestyles, political or social activities.

In the early years of the republic, most of Turkey's presidents were selected by the parliament from among the top military leaders, emphasizing the clear link between them and control of the Turkish state. There was also an implicit understanding that the Turkish military was the guardian of Kemalist secularism and that their lifestyle set a standard for Turkey's westernized image. Eliminating the headscarf was high on the secular agenda both to achieve a Europeanized modernity and to release Turkish women from their patriarchal bondage in Ottoman Turkey.

Read more:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/09/turkey-first-ladies-headscarf--2014911114226379736.html>

Algeria's achievements for women promotion stressed in Geneva

The speaker of the Council of the Nation (Upper House of parliament) Abdelkader Bensalah underlined Monday in Geneva at the 131st Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly, which is being held from 12 to 16 October, Algeria's achievements regarding the promotion of women and fight against violence against women.

Bensalah, who spoke in a special debate under the theme "Achieving gender equality, ending violence against women," highlighted the strategies adopted by Algeria in this field.

"The national strategy for the integration and promotion of women includes a multi-sectoral action plan, implemented by a national commission led by all the players concerned by the issues related to women, including the political rights," he said.

"The work of this commission is expected to last until the end of this year, but already several recommendations have become organic laws and voted by the Parliament," he added.

In this regard, he cited the increase in the chances of women's representation in the elected assemblies.

Read more:

<http://www.aps.dz/en/algeria/4432-algeria%E2%80%99s-achievements-for-women-promotion-stressed-in-geneva>

Moroccan Women Contribute 34.5 % To National GDP: Survey



Moroccan women's contribution to national wealth creation nears 21 %, and they spend an amount of time equivalent to 34.5 % of GDP in work and housework, said the High Commissioner for Planning Ahmed Lahlimi Alami.

“Women have significantly increased their presence in the workplace and reduced their household activities. The combination of these two activities reveals interesting results,” Lahlimi told the Moroccan daily L’Economiste.

The national survey on time use has provided information on unquantifiable activities which are not included in GDP calculation, the Moroccan official said, referring notably to domestic work, often carried out by women who ensure 92 % of household tasks.

“Men hardly contribute to these tasks. They are much present in the workplace, as they devote to work four times as much time”, he concluded.

Read more:

<http://www.morocoworldnews.com/2014/10/142754/moroccan-women-contribute-34-5-to-national-gdp-survey/>

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Lebanon MP Fattoush punches woman in the neck



Nicolas Fattoush Monday punched an office worker in the neck after she refused to prioritize his file at the Baabda Judicial Palace, a source inside the courthouse told The Daily Star. Fattoush arrived to the office of Manal Daou, an administrative officer responsible for processing complaints by lawyers. The lawmaker handed Daou his file and asked her to expedite it, but she responded that she was already working on another file, and that he would have to wait a few minutes before she could help him.

Angered by her request, the Zahle MP notified Daou of his position in government, and demanded that she give him priority. The situation quickly escalated with the office worker refusing to make an exception, and repeating for him to wait with the other visitors. Fattoush then raised his voice and began to punch her repeatedly in the throat, the source said.

Read more:

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/Oct-20/274693-lebanon-mp-fattoush-punches-woman-in-the-neck.ashx#ixzz3IRtf29UG>

'IS' militants abduct thousands of Yazidi women and girls



In attacks on the Yazidi religious minority in northern Iraq, "Islamic State" militants are said to have abducted up to 5,000 women and girls. Five survivors tell DW what they endured in 23 days of captivity.

The five girls sit with their heads bowed, veils pulled down over their faces, fingers clutched firmly together. They come from Kocho, a village in the Sinjar Mountains. Ceylan, the smallest, is 10, while the oldest, Zehra, is 20. For three weeks, they were held by the militants of the terrorist group "Islamic State" ("IS").

"In early August, the jihadists invaded our village," says Zehra. "They gave residents a choice: You have two days to become Muslim, otherwise you will be killed. But people did not want to convert to Islam. And so they drove us all into a school, separating the men from the women, into groups. My father was in the last group. We never saw him again."

Up to 400,000 Yazidis have been expelled from their villages and towns in northern Iraq. Hundreds were killed and - as it has now emerged - about 5,000 women were abducted and sent to Mosul, a figure that has been confirmed by aid organizations and Western diplomats.

Read more:

<http://www.dw.de/is-militants-abduct-thousands-of-yazidi-women-and-girls/a-17979641>

'Bad Hijab' Link to Acid Attacks on Iranian Women



A series of acid attacks on women in the historic Iranian city of Isfahan has raised fears and prompted rumors that the victims were targeted for not being properly veiled.

Police have declined to comment on a motive but suspects have been arrested and an investigation is ongoing. General Hossein Ashtari was quoted as saying by the official IRNA news agency.

He said four acid attacks had been reported in Isfahan, 450 kilometers (280 miles) south of Tehran, but he gave no other details.

The violence led to chatter on social networks that there had been up to 13 acid attacks against women drivers who were "badly veiled" with accompanying warnings against leaving car windows open.

Such incidents have risen in recent years in Pakistan, Afghanistan and India, with the abusers claiming they punished women for "sully" their family "honor" by committing "indecent" behavior.

Under Islamic law in force in Iran since the 1979 revolution, women must wear loose clothing, known as hijab, that covers the head and neck.

Read more:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/151790-bad-hijab-link-to-acid-attacks-on-iranian-women>

Why are women leaving science, engineering and tech jobs?

Recent research from the Center for Talent Innovation shows U.S. women working in science, engineering, and tech fields are 45% more likely than their male peers to leave the industry within the year.

It's not for lack of enthusiasm or passion. Of those women surveyed, 80% say they love their work, yet many still report barriers to getting to the top.

"Women entering STEM fields have a much shorter runway for career takeoff than women entering other industries," according to the report. "To begin with, they're starting later because of the time it took to get a Ph.D. That intensifies the ticking of their biological clock, which in turn pressures them to step up the pace of their research progress."

Companies like Merck, Johnson & Johnson, and Pfizer have been putting programs in place to help balance out this pipeline of leadership. But a number of factors need to be addressed before the issue can be resolved.

As predominantly male fields, it's no surprise a lingering old boys' club attitude in the science, engineering, and tech industries isolates women.

Read more:

<http://www.fastcompany.com/3037075/strong-female-lead/why-are-women-are-leaving-science-engineering-tech-jobs>

GENDER & HUMAN RIGHTS

Islamic State seeks to justify enslaving Yazidi women and girls in Iraq



The Islamic State group said it enslaved families from the minority Yazidi sect after overrunning their villages in northwestern Iraq, in what it praised as the revival of an ancient custom of using women and children as spoils of war.

In an article in its English-language online magazine Dabiq, the group provides what it says is religious justification for the enslavement of defeated "idolators".

The ancient custom of enslavement had fallen out of use because of deviation from true Islam, but was revived when fighters overran Yazidi villages in Iraq's Sinjar region.

"After capture, the Yazidi women and children were then divided according to the Shariah amongst the fighters of the Islamic State who participated in the Sinjar operations, after one fifth of the slaves were transferred to the Islamic State's authority to be divided as khums," it said.

Read more:

http://www.trust.org/item/20141013150320-65t19/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=AlertNet%20Expresso%20Oct%2014%202014&utm_content=AlertNet%20Expresso%20Oct%2014%202014+CID_b0b5e80515d655f403d05d868f4e0e90&utm_source=Campaign%20Monitor&utm_term=Islamic%20State%20seeks%20to%20justify%20enslaving%20Yazidi%20women%20and%20girls%20in%20Iraq

Australia Abandons Controversial Niqab Segregation Plan



A controversial plan to make women wearing the burqa or niqab sit in separate glassed public enclosures at Australia's Parliament House due to security concerns was abandoned Monday after an outcry.

The backdown followed a decision on October 2 by Speaker Bronwyn Bishop and Senate President Stephen Parry to seat people wearing face coverings in areas normally reserved for noisy school children while visiting parliament.

It followed heated debate about potential security risks since the rise of the Islamic State organisation.

The ruling was condemned by human rights and race discrimination groups, and Prime Minister Tony Abbott asked that it be reconsidered.

Race discrimination commissioner Tim Soutphommasane told Fairfax Media the original ruling meant Muslim women were being treated differently to non-Muslim women.

"No-one should be treated like a second-class citizen, not least in the parliament," he said.

"I have yet to see any expert opinion or analysis to date which indicates that the burqa or the niqab represents an additional or special security threat."

Read more:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/151857-australia-abandons-controversial-niqab-segregation-plan>

British-Iranian woman jailed for volleyball watching on hunger strike



A 25-year-old Iranian-British law school graduate, sentenced to a year in jail after trying to attend a men's volleyball game in Tehran, has reportedly launched a hunger strike from an Iranian prison.

Ghoncheh Ghavami was detained in June while watching an Iran-Italy volleyball match at Tehran's Freedom Stadium. She was later released, but re-arrested and put on trial.

On Sunday, the court said it would sentence Ghavami to a year in prison, according to her lawyer, although members of her family have since told journalists that the court has not yet formalised the verdict.

Ahead of her trial, Ghavami reportedly began the hunger strike, refusing solid foods and liquids, her brother, Iman Ghavami, told *The Guardian*.

Iran banned women from volleyball games in 2012, extending a long-standing ban on football matches. The Iranian government argues that women need protection from the lewd behaviour of male fans.

Ghavami along with a group of other women tried to protest the ban according to Amnesty International, which said the verdict was "appalling".

Read more:

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/british-iranian-woman-jailed-volleyball-watching-goes-hunger-strike-901025240>

Iran hangs woman despite international uproar

Iran has executed a 26-year-old woman convicted for killing a man who she said tried to sexually abuse her.

Reyhaneh Jabbari was arrested in 2007 for the murder of Morteza Abdolali Sarbandi, a former employee of Iran's Ministry of Intelligence.

She was hanged at dawn on Saturday, the official IRNA news agency quoted the Tehran prosecutor's office as saying.

A message posted on the homepage of a Facebook campaign that was set up to try to save her, but which now states "Rest in Peace," appeared to confirm the report.

Efforts for clemency had intensified in recent weeks. Jabbari's mother was allowed to visit her for one hour on Friday, Amnesty International said, a custom that tends to precede executions in Iran.

Jabbari was sentenced to death by a criminal court in Tehran in 2009 in what Amnesty International said was a "deeply flawed investigation and trial".

Her execution was due to be carried out on September 30 but was postponed for 10 days.

Read more:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/10/amnesty-iran-set-hang-woman-at-dawn-2014102422855125759.html>

France: Some Contradictions Between Gender Equality Policy And Practice



Three months after the enactment of the Framework Law for true Equality between Women and Men in France, AWID spoke to women's and LGBTQI rights activists about the various components of French policy on gender equality, to learn more about its limitations.

During the cabinet reshuffle of August 26, 2014, the Ministry of Women's Rights, established in May 2012 and recast as the Ministry of Women's Rights, Urban Affairs, Youth and Sports in April 2014, was eliminated altogether. The downgrading to a State Secretariat for Women's Rights under the Ministry of Social Affairs, Health and Women's Rights has spurred the indignation of part of the feminist movement, as it not only reneges on a promise made by President Francois Hollande during his election campaign in May 2012, but it is also a reversal of legal and institutional gains.

Since 2012 France has made significant progress in terms of institutional and legal gender equality. However, the establishment of a ministry dedicated to women's rights, the fight against violence against women, laws opening marriage and adoption to same-sex couples and a framework law on equality between women and men have resulted in questionable progress in reality.

Read more:

<http://www.awid.org/News-Analysis/Friday-Files/France-Some-Contradictions-between-Gender-Equality-Policy-and-Practice>

Iran Moves To Muzzle Media Coverage Of Acid Attacks



Iranian officials are moving to muzzle media coverage of a string of recent acid attacks targeting young women in the central city of Isfahan.

The attacks have sparked outrage and fear among many Iranians who last week took to the streets of Isfahan and Tehran to protest and call for government action.

Seven or eight women in Isfahan have had liquid acid thrown on them by men on motorcycles, according to Iran's police chief, Esmail Ahmadi Moghadam. The attacks have left some of the victims badly burned, disfigured, and blind.

In recent days, several Iranian officials have warned the media over their coverage of the crimes, accusing them of fomenting public discord and promoting the "views of the enemy."

Read more:

<http://www.rferl.org/content/iran-acid-attacks-media/26660203.html>

Gender Equality: Bad News for Moroccan Women

If you are a Moroccan woman, The Global Gender Gap Report 2014 will make you want to sob. According to the report, Moroccan women are ranked 133 out of 142 countries in terms of equality. To put it into perspective, Moroccan women are doing a little better than women from Chad (140), but worse than women from Guinea (132).

What is more upsetting is that the status of Moroccan women has actually gotten much worse in the last nine years. Since 2005, Morocco's rank dropped from 106 to 133. The report indicated that Morocco is among five countries with the highest absolute and relative decrease on the Economic Participation and Opportunity sub-index over the past nine years. In 2014, Morocco continued to be one of the twenty lowest-performing countries on the Literacy rate indicator.

I am not sure if decision-makers in Morocco even know this report exists. Reading the report should make them pause.

Moroccan women are the backbone of the family structure around which Moroccan society is based. With these horrific rankings, how can we ever expect to see Morocco make any social progress?

Ten years ago, the king of Morocco asked, "How can society achieve progress while women, who represent half the nation, see their rights violated and suffer as a result of injustice, violence, and marginalization?"

Read more:

<http://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2014/10/142724/gender-equality-bad-news-for-moroccan-women/>

RESOURCES & CALLS

BOOKS & REPORTS

Maternity and paternity at work: Law and practice across the world

This report provides a picture of where we stand and what we have learned so far about maternity and paternity rights across the world. It offers a rich international comparative analysis of law and practice relating to maternity protection at work in 185 countries and territories, comprising leave, cash benefits, employment protection and non-discrimination, health protection, breastfeeding arrangements at work and childcare. Expanding on previous editions, it is based on an extensive set of new legal and statistical indicators, including coverage in law and in practice of paid maternity leave as well as statutory provision of paternity and parental leave and their evolution over the last 20 years. The report also takes account of the recent economic crisis and austerity measures. It shows how well national laws and practice conform to the ILO Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), its accompanying Recommendation (No. 191) and the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156), and offers guidance on policy design and implementation.

Direct link to report:

http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_242615.pdf

Promoting women's economic empowerment: what works?

A review of rigorous evaluations of interventions that seek to empower women economically shows that the same class of interventions has significantly different outcomes depending on the client. Capital alone, as a small cash loan or grant, is not sufficient to grow women-owned subsistence-level firms. However, it can work if it is delivered in-kind to more successful women microentrepreneurs, and it should boost the performance of women's larger-sized SMEs. Very poor women need a more intensive package of services than do less poor women to break out of subsistence production and grow their businesses. What works for young women does not necessarily work for adult women. Skills training, job search assistance, internships, and wage subsidies increase the employment levels of adult women but do not raise wages. However, similar interventions increase young women's employability and earnings if social restrictions are not binding. Women who run subsistence-level firms face additional social constraints when compared to similar men, thus explaining the differences in the outcomes of some loans, grants, and training interventions that favor men.

Read more:

<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/2014/11/20346367/promoting-womens-economic-empowerment-works>

Direct link to report:

http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2014/11/04/000158349_20141104112018/Rendered/PDF/WPS7087.pdf

World Survey on the Role of Women in Development 2014: Gender Equality and Sustainable Development

UN Women has launched the report of a five-yearly survey that demonstrates why gender equality must be at the centre of sustainable development. The report is well timed to link in with current global debates around the definition of the Sustainable Development Goals and the emergence of the post-2015 framework. The 2014 report focuses on gender equality and sustainable development, with chapters on the green economy and care work, food security, population dynamics, and investments for gender-responsive sustainable development. It recommends concrete policy actions to move towards an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable future, in which all women and girls, men and boys enjoy their human rights.

Read more:

http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/gender&id=69577&type=Document#.VF3ZrTSUeS_o

Direct link to report:

http://www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2014/unwomen_surveyreport_advance_16oct.pdf

The Global Gender Gap Report 2014

In this year's Global Gender Gap Report 2014, the World Economic Forum quantifies the magnitude of gender-based disparities and tracks their progress over time. The Global Gender Gap Index presented in the report seeks to measure the relative gaps between women and men across four key areas: health, education, economy and politics. It identifies those countries that are role models in equitably allocating their resources between women and men, regardless of the overall level of those resources. To complement this, the Country Profiles contain a comprehensive set of supporting information that provides the broader context on laws, social norms and policies within a country. This year's Report also provides unique new insights on the pace of change, and where change is coming from, based on almost a decade of data.

The full report is available in PDF format and the World Economic Forum website also provides a kind of 'minisite' specifically on the Global Gender Gap report that breaks down key sections within report and includes a video, blog and social media commentary and a 'Heatmap' – amongst other things.

Read more:

http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/gender&id=69576&type=Document#.VF3ZrzSUEs_o

For a direct link to report:

http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GGGR14/GGGR_CompleteReport_2014.pdf

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