



HIDDEN FIGURES

WOMEN RANGERS AND THEIR STORIES OF SAVING BIODIVERSITY IN PAKISTAN



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Designed by Muhammad Ahsan Tariq

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FOREWORD

Rangers are at the heart of nature protection and conservation. They are often the unsung heroes and heroines of the critical effort to protect biodiversity and ecosystems. Being a ranger extends far beyond law enforcement; as planetary health workers, rangers are also educators, researchers, visitor guides, first responders, and vital liaisons with communities.

Until relatively recently, women were rarely seen in ranger forces, particularly in frontline roles. Although representation is slowly increasing, they continue to face gender-specific challenges, with global estimates indicating that only 3–11% of rangers are women. Yet women bring essential skills and perspectives to the profession: they often excel in community engagement, conflict de-escalation, accurate record-keeping, and reaching constituencies that men may not. Their presence strengthens ranger networks and expands the scope of conservation efforts.

The Hyères Ranger Declaration, adopted at the 10th World Ranger Congress in 2024 by the International Ranger Federation (IRF), emphasises the need for safe and enabling environments for women, reinforcing gender inclusivity as a global priority. Aligned with this vision, the IRF's Female Ranger Working Group plays a pivotal role in advancing gender equality by building capacity, fostering mentorship, supporting professional development, and ensuring the voices of women rangers are represented in global conservation dialogues.

This booklet is a step in that journey. Within Pakistan, women remain significantly underrepresented across forestry, wildlife, and fisheries sectors. This publication seeks to spotlight their stories and journeys, highlighting the resilience, passion, and diversity of women rangers who protect landscapes ranging from mountains and forests to rivers, and working with species from leopards and pangolins to bears and birds. It offers an opportunity to both showcase their inspiring contributions and reaffirm our collective commitment to gender equality and equity in the workplace.

We believe that this collection of stories stands as both a tribute to the resilience and dedication of women rangers and a reaffirmation of our shared commitment to advancing gender equity and inclusivity in conservation, now and for generations to come.

Female Ranger Working Group

International Ranger Federation

MESSAGE FROM HAMDAD NAQI KHAN

In the quiet corners of forests, the rugged peaks of mountains, and the vibrant wetlands that sustain life; the voices of Pakistan's women rangers echo with determination and hope. These courageous women are guardians of our wildlife and ecosystems, inspiring countless others to believe in the power of dedication and purpose.

At WWF-Pakistan, we believe that protecting our natural heritage requires empowering those who stand at the frontlines of conservation. The women featured in this booklet exemplify what becomes possible when barriers are broken and opportunities are created for women to lead as stewards of biodiversity. Their journeys remind us that conservation is not only about protecting species and landscapes but also about advancing equity and inclusion within our society.

This booklet celebrates the often-unseen women whose contributions to conservation are significant. Their stories are not only accounts of personal courage but also reflections of the collective spirit of a nation striving to protect its natural heritage for generations to come.

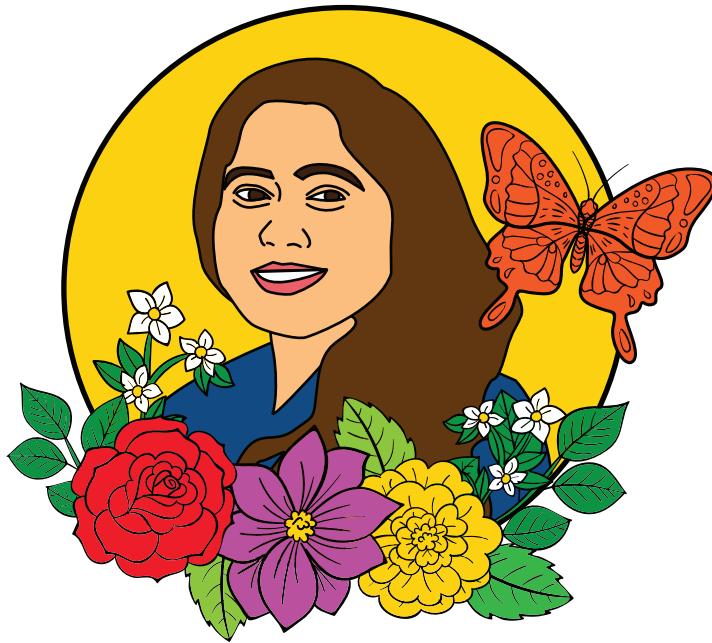
May these stories inspire us all to support and recognize the vital role women play in safeguarding nature. Together, let us work toward a Pakistan where nature is valued, and every woman working for its protection is honoured and celebrated.

I extend my deepest gratitude to the women rangers who shared their stories with us and to all those who continue to protect our future with unwavering commitment.

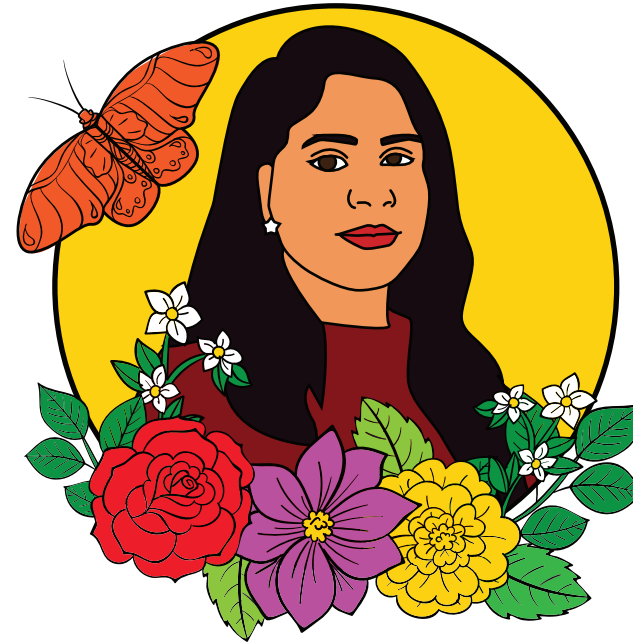
Hammad Naqi Khan
Director General, WWF-Pakistan

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

This collection has been thoughtfully put together by two of WWF-Pakistan's leading voices in conservation, diversity, and gender empowerment.



Hamera Aisha is the Asia Representative of the International Ranger Federation and Secretary of the Ranger Federation of Asia (RFA). She is working as the Senior Manager of Wildlife with WWF-Pakistan.



Fareeha Naseem a Senior Research and Conservation Officer at WWF-Pakistan, is a dynamic gender specialist and conservation professional with over seven years of experience.

CHAMPIONING WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

RIZWANA AZIZ'S INSPIRING JOURNEY



Name: Rizwana Aziz

Designation: Assistant Chief Wildlife Ranger

Department: Punjab Wildlife and Parks Department, Rawalpindi District

Rizwana is the first woman to join the Punjab Wildlife and Parks Department, where she has consistently demonstrated exceptional leadership and remarkable abilities in wildlife conservation. A pioneer in in-situ conservation, she has played a pivotal role in the safe rescue and release of Indian pangolins in Punjab, one of the most trafficked mammals in the world. Despite limited resources, Rizwana and her team have been at the forefront of efforts to protect vulnerable species, showcasing resilience and dedication in the fight to preserve biodiversity.

Known as the pangolin lady of Pakistan, Rizwana's work involves preventing and penalizing poaching, shooting, and illegal trading of wildlife. Her efforts have strengthened enforcement measures, raised awareness about the importance of conservation, and inspired a new generation of conservationists.

Rizwana's academic foundation is as impressive as her professional accomplishments. With a Master's degree in Zoology from Bahauddin Zakariya University (BZU), Multan, and an M Phil in Wildlife Management from PMAS-Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi, her expertise has been instrumental in shaping policies and practices that prioritize sustainable conservation in Punjab. Her educational journey reflects a deep passion for wildlife, laying the groundwork for her impactful career.

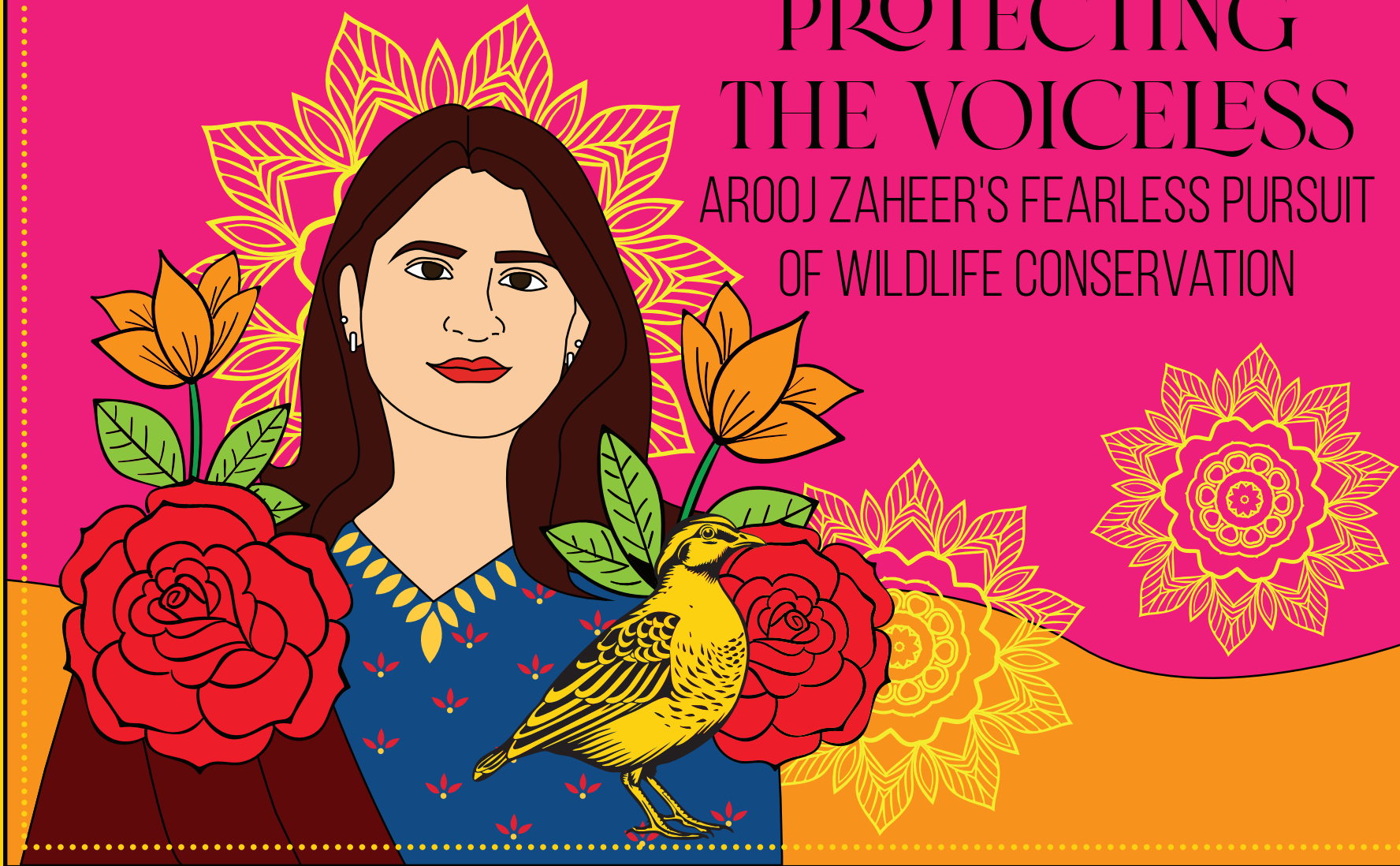
Rizwana's bravery and passion for wildlife conservation are exemplary. As a role model and champion of wildlife conservation, Rizwana Aziz continues to inspire us all to take action to protect our planet's precious wildlife. Her groundbreaking initiatives have earned her the prestigious TJ Roberts Conservation Award, a testament to her tireless efforts to combat illegal poaching and wildlife trade.

Her experience in dealing with culprits, including notorious hunters and protected area land grabbers, is a remarkable story of courage and bravery. Rizwana has broken barriers and carved a unique niche for herself earning credibility and respect in a traditionally male-dominated field. Her journey is not only one of conservation but also empowerment, inspiring countless young women to follow in her footsteps. Among them is Naghmana, one of many aspiring conservationists who view Rizwana as a role model and a mentor.

Rizwana Aziz's story is a powerful reminder that one person can make a difference in the fight against wildlife trafficking and habitat destruction. As we celebrate Rizwana's remarkable journey, we are reminded of the importance of conservation and the impact that dedicated individuals can have on the world.

PROTECTING THE VOICELESS

AROOJ ZAHEER'S FEARLESS PURSUIT
OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION



Name: *Arooj Zaheer*

Designation: *Assistant Chief Wildlife Ranger*

Department: *Punjab Wildlife & Parks Department, Sargodha District*

In the heart of Punjab, Pakistan, a remarkable woman has dedicated her life to safeguarding the region's precious wildlife. Arooj Zaheer, a passionate zoologist and Assistant Chief Wildlife Ranger in Sargodha has defied conventions and overcome challenges to emerge as a champion of conservation.

Arooj's story begins in the picturesque, yet remote, village of Kashmir, where her deep connection to nature blossomed at an early age. Her family's relocation to Punjab provided her with opportunities to pursue higher education, culminating in an MPhil in Zoology from the University of Sargodha. This academic foundation, combined with her innate passion, propelled her into a fulfilling career.

As the only female wildlife officer in her region, Arooj has faced formidable challenges, from gender biases to logistical constraints. Undeterred by the lack of female-specific facilities and safety concerns, she has leveraged her position to achieve remarkable results. Arooj's empathetic approach and tenacity gave her an edge in managing issues, earning her respect and admiration from colleagues and communities.

One notable example of Arooj's bravery and strategic approach was during a standoff with quail hunters in Sargodha. Despite facing gunfire, she remained resolute and conducted a successful raid, showcasing her unwavering commitment to conservation.

For Arooj, conservation is more than a profession; it is a sacred mission. She finds immense satisfaction in protecting voiceless creatures and preserving the natural world. Arooj's accomplishments are a testament to her dedication and expertise. She has conducted population censuses of endangered species, protected vital habitats like Chashma Lake, and rescued numerous animals, including black bears and pangolins. Her tireless anti-poaching efforts have led to significant fines and legal actions, illustrating the tangible impact of her work.

Arooj's story serves as a powerful inspiration for future generations of wildlife conservationists. By championing the fight against wildlife extinction and habitat destruction, she ensures a brighter future for Pakistan's precious natural heritage.

SIDRA TUL
MUNTHAH
AND HER JOURNEY TO PROTECT
PRECIOUS WILDLIFE



Name: Sidra Tul Munthah

Designation: Assistant Chief Wildlife Ranger

Department: Punjab Wildlife & Parks Department, D.G Khan Region

Women who lead bring transformative perspectives and inclusive solutions, often driving impactful change in critical areas like wildlife conservation. Sidra Tul Munthah, an Assistant Chief Wildlife Ranger in the Wildlife and Parks Department of the Government of Punjab, exemplifies this truth. She is also the youngest woman officer to join the Department. Her commitment to safeguarding wildlife has inspired a new generation of female conservationists to join the fight against wildlife poaching and hunting loss.

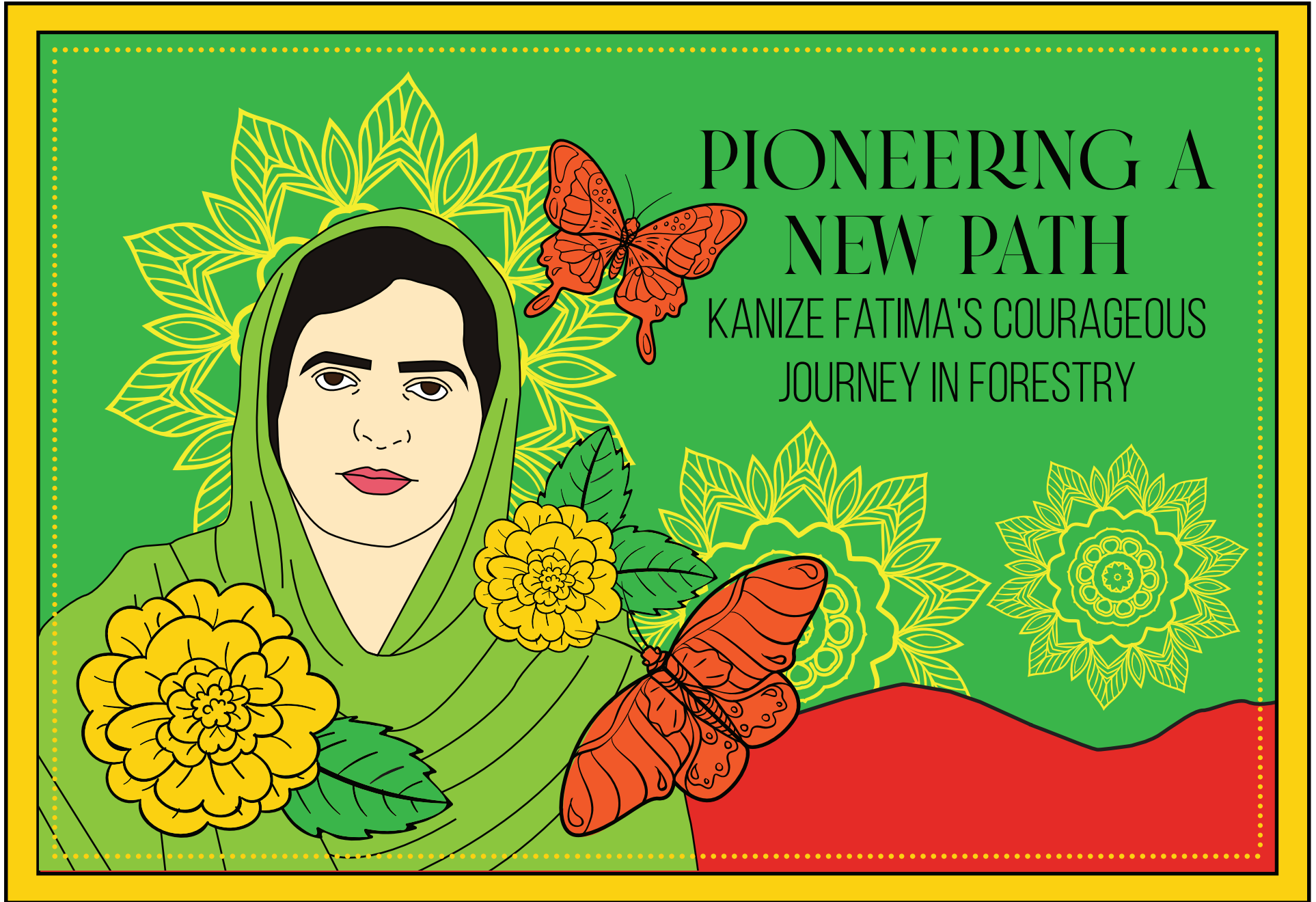
Sidra, a zoologist driven by an unyielding commitment to protect biodiversity. Over the past five years, her work has epitomized courage, resilience, and innovation, focusing on the protection and rehabilitation of Pakistan's rich and diverse wildlife. Her achievements are as inspiring as they are impactful. She has successfully rescued and rehabilitated numerous animals, including the majestic grey wolf, striped hyena, Asiatic black bear, monkey, python, hog deer, and rare falcon species. Her work has also focused on protecting migratory birds, such as cranes that flock to Pakistan's wetlands every year.

Hailing from a community where women are often perceived as vulnerable, she has not only shattered these stereotypes but also emerged as a role model for countless women and girls aspiring to careers in conservation. Sidra furthered expressed her views and stated that "Throughout my tenure, I have faced numerous challenges, particularly in combating wildlife crimes such as bear baiting and poaching." This illegal activity is often perpetuated by Kalanders, a group of beggars who would travel with bears and arrange fights with wild dogs for entertainment purposes. Politicians and influential individuals from tribal areas frequently facilitate these events, collecting money from participants. "When we attempt to enforce laws and regulations, politicians often intervene, recommending reduced fines or leniency for their constituents."

To tackle this issue, Sidra employed a multifaceted approach that combined education, community engagement, and strict legal enforcement. She worked tirelessly with local communities to raise awareness about the importance of wildlife conservation and the negative impacts of bear baiting and poaching. However, Sidra strategically involved the judicial system, ensuring that her actions were transparent, impartial, and grounded in the law.

Despite the challenges, Sidra's unwavering dedication has yielded tangible progress. Through persistence and collaboration with local stakeholders, she has made strides in curbing wildlife crimes and fostering a culture of conservation. Her efforts serve as a testament to the power of perseverance and the importance of community-driven solutions.

Her work reminds us that with determination and courage, even the most entrenched challenges can be overcome, leaving a lasting impact on both people and the planet. Her passion and dedication serve as an example for emerging female rangers and conservationists. As a true wildlife warrior, Sidra Tul Munthah's legacy will continue to inspire generations to come, motivating them to join the fight to protect Pakistan's precious wildlife.



PIONEERING A NEW PATH

KANIZE FATIMA'S COURAGEOUS
JOURNEY IN FORESTRY

Name: *Kanize Fatima*

Designation: *Divisional Forest Officer, DFO (HQ)*

Department: *Punjab Forest Department, Northern Zone, Rawalpindi*

Kanize Fatima's fascination with forestry sparked a groundbreaking career, inspiring generations of women. In 2015, she made history as the first female forester to join the Punjab Forest Department through the Punjab Public Service Commission.

Kanize graduated from the Pakistan Forest Institute Peshawar in 2005. Despite facing a tragic incident during training, she demonstrated remarkable resilience, earning her master's degree in 2007. Currently, she serves as DFO in the Office of the Chief Conservator of Forests, North Zone, Rawalpindi, a position she has held since 2025.

Her expertise lies in watershed management and soil conservation techniques, particularly in Pakistan's critical catchment areas. Kanize has been a staunch advocate for women's involvement in forest conservation, delivering lectures that emphasize the importance of increasing forest cover, combating smog, and promoting sustainable practices. Through community outreach and education, she promotes sustainable forest management and conservation practices.

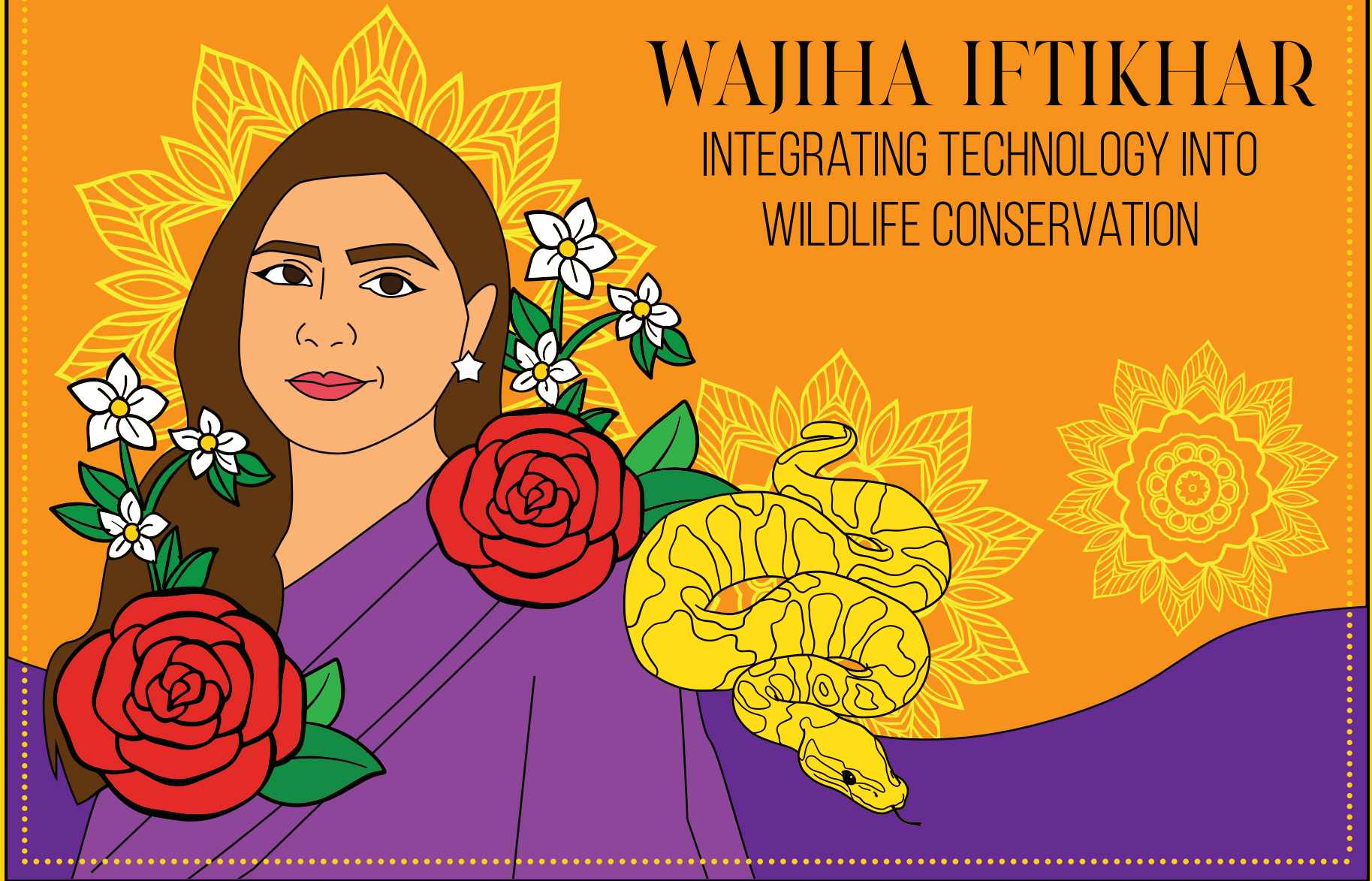
Her appointment marked a significant milestone in a traditionally male-dominated field. This progression reflects her unwavering dedication to breaking barriers and advancing her field. Beyond her fieldwork, Kanize has contributed significantly to forestry education. She became the first female officer to serve at the Forest Services Academy in Ghoragali, further cementing her role as a trailblazer. Her dedication, expertise, and leadership have profoundly impacted the Punjab Forest Department, inspiring future generations of women to explore forestry and environmental services as viable career paths.

As a pioneer, she has paved the way for future generations to become active stakeholders in protecting our planet's precious natural resources. Kanize's story is more than just an inspiring tale; it's a call to action. She urges us to join the movement to promote sustainable forest management and conservation practices. "Together, we can ensure the protection of our planet's natural resources for generations to come."

Let Kanize's courageous journey motivate you to be part of this critical mission, championing a greener and more sustainable future.

WAJIHA IFTIKHAR

INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY INTO
WILDLIFE CONSERVATION



Name: *Wajiha Iftikhar*

Designation: *GIS Incharge / Remote Sensing Analyst*

Department: *Punjab Wildlife & Parks Department*

As a passionate female ranger in the Punjab Wildlife & Parks Department, Wajiha Iftikhar has dedicated her career to harnessing the power of technological innovation to drive wildlife conservation. With six years of professional experience and a solid academic foundation as a gold medalist in MPhil Space Science from Punjab University, Wajiha has become a leading expert in remote sensing and GIS technologies.

Wajiha's work is at the forefront of wildlife conservation, utilizing cutting-edge GIS mapping and remote sensing technologies to monitor wildlife populations, evaluate habitat health, and track landscape dynamics with precision. Her meticulous efforts involve collecting and analyzing field data to understand species distribution, wildlife movement patterns, and environmental changes.

Wajiha's dedication transcends technical boundaries. She is deeply invested in fostering a culture of conservation awareness. By collaborating with government bodies, private stakeholders, and local communities, she creates synergies to preserve wildlife and its habitats. Through digital innovations and crowdsourcing initiatives, Wajiha inspires the next generation to become active stewards of the environment.

As a female ranger, Wajiha takes immense pride in contributing to the conservation of Punjab's biodiversity through modern technologies. By seamlessly integrating technological advancements with community-driven initiatives, Wajiha has created a model of conservation that is both innovative and inclusive. Her efforts have led to measurable progress in wildlife protection and sustainable development, ensuring a brighter future for Punjab's ecosystems.

Wajiha's story is a testament to the power of dedication, innovation, and community engagement in driving meaningful change. As a trailblazing female ranger, her story is a powerful reminder that staying true to your vision- despite the obstacles- can lead to meaningful change and lasting impact.

KASHAF AMIR

A GUARDIAN OF THE FORESTS



Name: *Kashaf Amir*

Designation: *Sub-Divisional Forest Officer, Litigation (SDFO)*

Department: *Punjab Forest Department, Rawalpindi Circle*

Deep within the lush forests of Kahuta, a dedicated Sub-Divisional Forest Officer, Kashaf Amir, works tirelessly to preserve the delicate balance of the ecosystem. As a key player in the sustainable use and management of the forest, Kashaf's mission is to protect and conserve the forest's health, ensuring its vitality for generations to come. Kashaf's journey as a forest guardian is not without its challenges. From combating disease infestations to navigating the complexities of forest management, every day tests her skills, resilience, and ingenuity. Yet, despite these obstacles, Kashaf finds immense fulfillment in her work. "I love my job," she says with infectious enthusiasm. "I get to explore the wonders of nature every day, and that's a truly rewarding experience."

As a field-based officer, Kashaf spends most of her time immersed in the forest. Collaborating closely with her team, she identifies and addresses threats to the ecosystem. Her expertise in curtailing and removing disease infestations is crucial to maintaining the forest's health and vitality. Kashaf's passion for her work is evident in every aspect of her job. Guided by a profound respect for the natural world, she is committed to preserving its beauty and importance for future generations.

As a woman in a traditionally male-dominated field, Kashaf is also a role model for young women who aspire to careers in forestry and conservation. Her determination and dedication serve as a powerful reminder that with hard work and perseverance, barriers can be overcome, and meaningful change is possible.

Kashaf Amir's story is a testament to the power of passion and commitment to making a difference in the world. As a guardian of the forests, she inspires others to join her in the vital work of protecting our planet's precious natural resources.

Sustainable forest management plays a vital role in maintaining the balance of our ecosystems. Forests are not just natural resources; they are lifelines for countless communities, especially women, who depend heavily on them for fuel, food, and income. Their dependence on forests is deeply tied to their everyday lives, making their involvement in sustainable forest management not just important, but essential. Yet, despite this connection, women are still underrepresented in the forestry sector—a gap that professionals like Kashaf Amir are working hard to bridge.

Kashaf Amir is a shining example of how women are making a mark in this critical field. Working in the lush forests of Kahuta, she's dedicated to preserving the delicate ecosystems that sustain both wildlife and communities. In her role within the Timber Extraction Division, Kashaf ensures that forests are managed responsibly, balancing the use of resources with the need to maintain their health and vitality.

But Kashaf's journey hasn't been without its hurdles. Entering a male-dominated field, she faced her share of skepticism and challenges. From proving her capabilities to navigating the logistical difficulties of working in remote areas, Kashaf has tackled it all with resilience. Her determination to succeed and her passion for conservation have not only helped her overcome these barriers but have also paved the way for other women to follow in her footsteps.

Kashaf's story is one of courage, perseverance, and a deep love for nature. She's not just protecting forests—she's inspiring others to join her mission, proving that women have an indispensable role in conservation. As she continues her work, Kashaf hopes to see more women step into leadership roles in forestry, bringing their unique perspectives and strengths to the sector.

An illustration of a woman, Shagufta Bibi, wearing a white headscarf and a white dress with blue floral patterns. She is surrounded by large purple flowers and a yellow bird in flight. The background is pink with yellow floral patterns. The entire illustration is framed by a yellow border with a dotted line.

SOWING THE SEEDS
OF CONSERVATION
SHAGUFTA BIBI'S 22-YEAR JOURNEY
TO EMPOWER PAKISTAN'S FOREST
GUARDIANS

Name: *Shagufta Bibi*

Designation: *Senior Instructor*

Department: *KP Forest School Thai Abbottabad*

In the foothills of the Himalayas, where the air is crisp and the forests are lush, a remarkable woman has dedicated her life to nurturing the next generation of conservation leaders. Shagufta Bibi, a distinguished forestry expert, has spent 22 years tirelessly safeguarding Pakistan's natural heritage.

Shagufta's academic foundation is built on excellence. She earned a BSc and MSc in Forestry from the prestigious Pakistan Forest Institute in Peshawar. Her thirst for knowledge took her to the Netherlands, where she pursued an MS degree in Forest and Nature Conservation from Wageningen University. This international experience broadened her perspective and equipped her with cutting-edge expertise to address the complex challenges facing Pakistan's forests and wildlife.

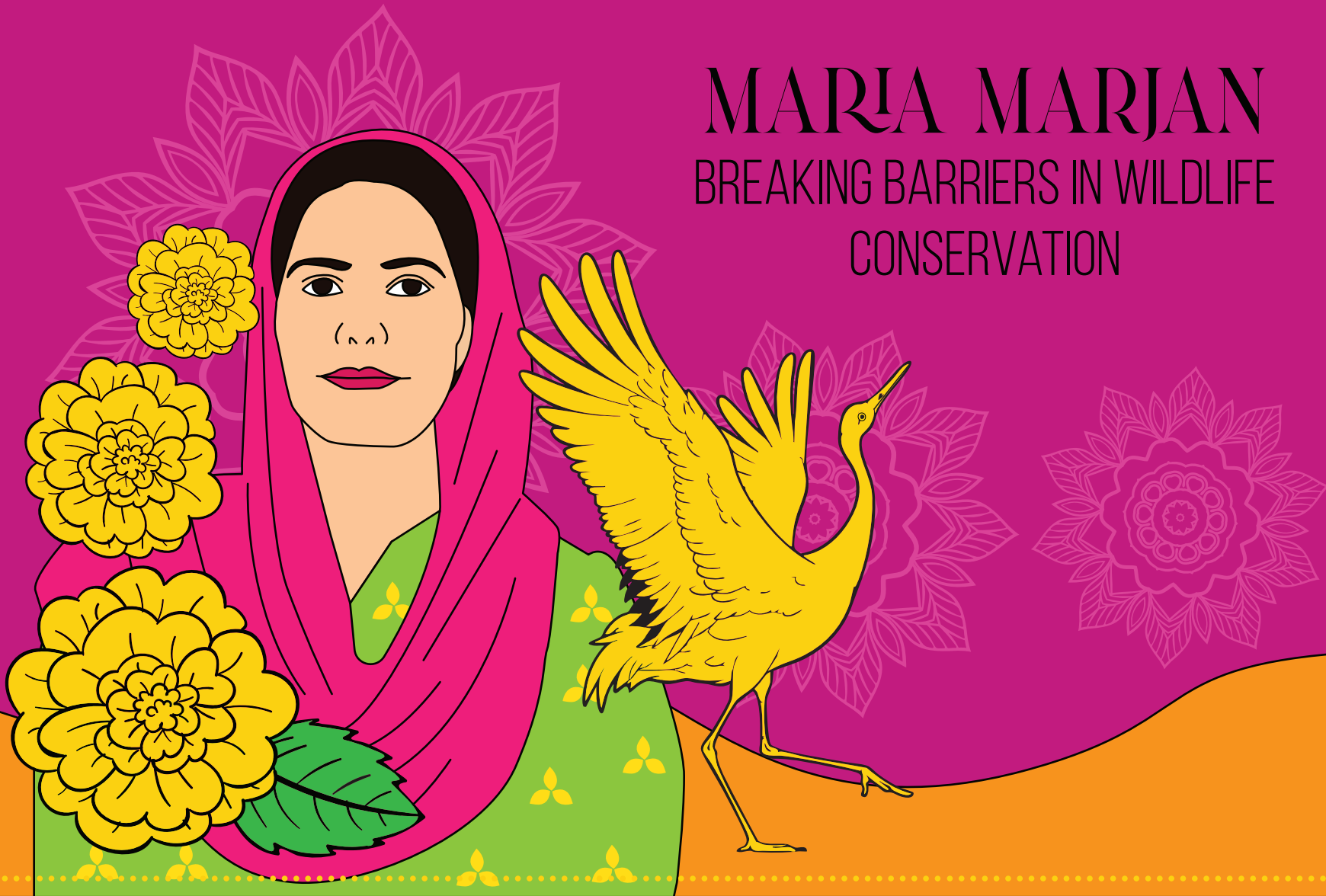
As a Senior Instructor at the KP Forest School in Thai Abbottabad, Shagufta has dedicated herself to shaping the minds of future forest guardians. She imparts her expertise with unwavering enthusiasm, equipping field staff with innovative strategies to conserve nature, forests, and wildlife. Her curriculum focuses on climate change mitigation, protecting forests and wildlife from natural and human-induced hazards, and promoting sustainable forest management.

Shagufta's greatest achievement lies in the success of her students, many of whom have risen to become accomplished professionals in the Forest and Wildlife Departments of Pakistan. They represent diverse regions, including KP, Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and the Federal Capital. Her students' dedication to conservation is a testament to Shagufta's tireless efforts and her ability to inspire and empower others.

Shagufta Bibi's 22-year journey is a story of passion, dedication, and unwavering commitment to a noble cause. It serves as a beacon of inspiration, motivating countless others to join the fight against environmental degradation and wildlife extinction. As a nation, we owe a debt of gratitude to this unsung hero, who has selflessly devoted her life to safeguarding Pakistan's natural heritage for future generations.

MARIA MARJAN

BREAKING BARRIERS IN WILDLIFE
CONSERVATION



Name: Maria Marjan

Designation: Divisional Wildlife Officer

Department: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Wildlife Department

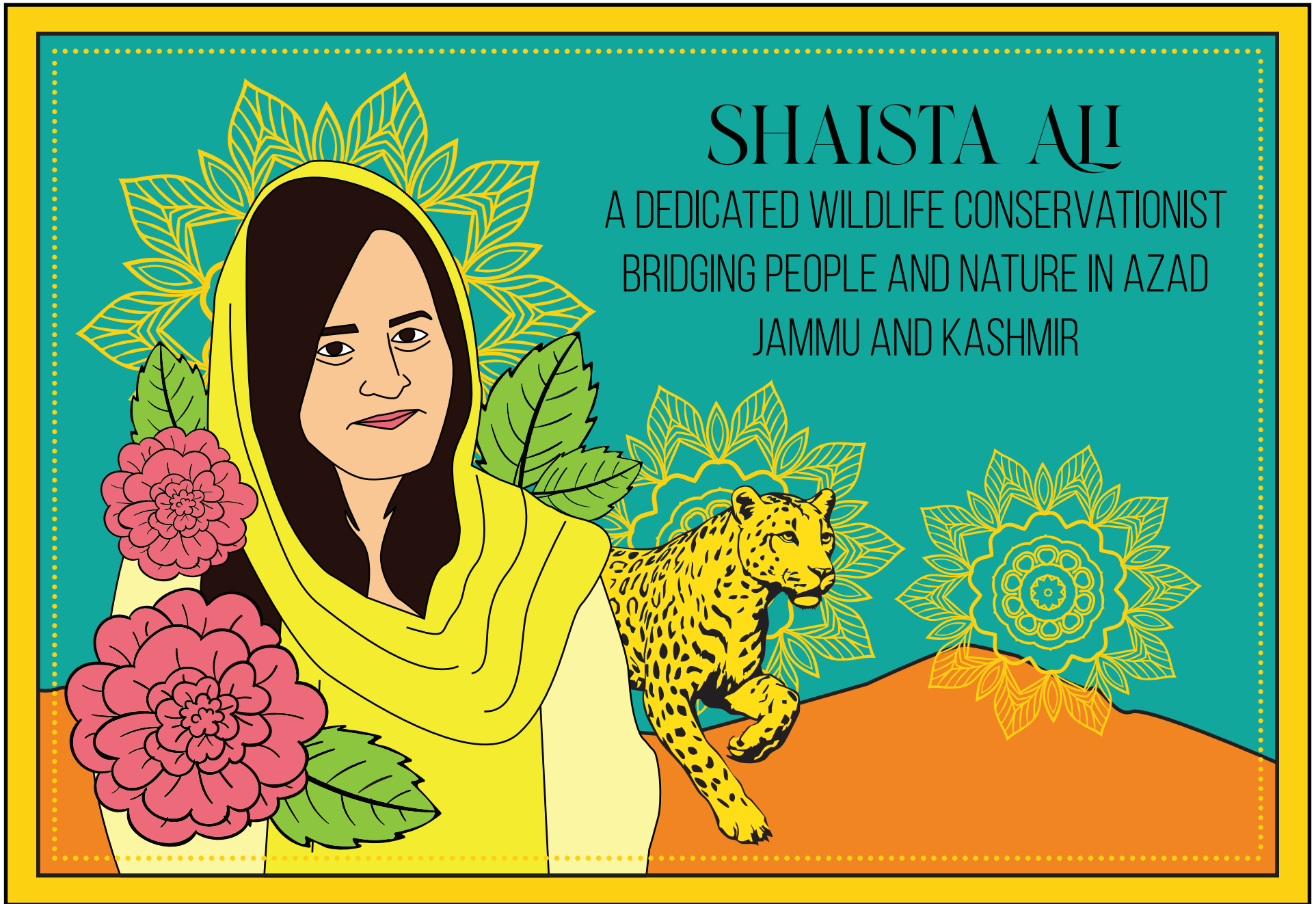
Growing up in the remote and reserved culture of Karak, KP, Maria Marjan defied expectations by pursuing a career in wildlife conservation—a field rarely chosen by women in her community. Despite societal norms and the challenges of stepping into a male-dominated profession, Maria's passion for nature and wildlife drove her to chart an exceptional path. With a Master's degree in Forestry from the Pakistan Forest Institute, Peshawar, Maria joined the KP Wildlife Department as a Sub-Divisional Wildlife Officer in 2014.

However, Maria's journey was far from smooth. As a woman in a patriarchal society, she faced skepticism and resistance from her colleagues, who doubted her ability to perform a field job. She recalls the discomfort of traveling with male colleagues in the same vehicle, highlighting the need for more women-friendly infrastructure in the field. But Maria was determined to prove them wrong. She worked tirelessly, demonstrating her skills and dedication, and eventually earned a promotion to Divisional Wildlife Officer in 2019.

Her career-defining breakthrough came in 2021 when Maria was entrusted with a field assignment—a groundbreaking achievement as the first female officer in her department to hold such a position. Bolstered by her family's support and her unwavering resolve, Maria excelled in her responsibilities, challenging stereotypes and proving women's capabilities in conservation work.

Maria's story is a testament to her courage, resilience, and passion for wildlife conservation. Her experiences serve as a reminder of the obstacles that women face in male-dominated fields, but also of the power of determination and hard work to overcome them.

As Maria looks back on her decade-long journey, she remains committed to her mission of protecting and conserving wildlife. Her story inspires others to follow in her footsteps, challenging stereotypes and breaking down barriers along the way.



SHAISTA ALI

A DEDICATED WILDLIFE CONSERVATIONIST
BRIDGING PEOPLE AND NATURE IN AZAD
JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Name: Shaista Ali

Designation: Monitoring Officer

Department: Wildlife & Fisheries Department AJ&K

Shaista Ali is a passionate wildlife conservationist from Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJ&K), Pakistan. She has dedicated years to protecting nature and has worked on some of the most important wildlife projects in the region. Shaista's passion for wildlife took root during her studies in zoology, where she specialized in wildlife conservation. During her M Phil and Ph D, she focused on understanding the genetics and ecology of the common leopard in AJ&K, which remains her core area of expertise.

Today, Shaista serves as a Monitoring Officer for the Wildlife Department in AJ&K. Her responsibilities span a wide spectrum—from biodiversity preservation to fostering community participation and addressing human-wildlife conflicts. Over the years, she has spearheaded field surveys, developed management plans, and published research on iconic wildlife species such as the black bear, cheer pheasant, grey goral, and common leopard.

One of Shaista's most impactful contributions has been her work on mitigating human-leopard conflicts in AJ&K. Since 2008, Shaista has conducted field studies to understand why and how these conflicts can be resolved. Her efforts led to the creation of a comprehensive conflict management plan, as well as awareness campaigns in local communities to promote coexistence. Through workshops, training sessions, and educational materials, she has educated people about the importance of conserving leopards while addressing their concerns about safety and livestock.

Shaista's commitment to conservation extends beyond fieldwork. She has played a pivotal role in creating educational materials such as pamphlets and booklets on wildlife and environmental issues. Her notable publications include booklets on the "Wildlife of AJ&K," "Migratory Birds of Mangla Dam," and "Medicinal Plants of AJ&K". She also organized zero-plastic campaigns in the protected areas, raising awareness about reducing waste to protect the environment.

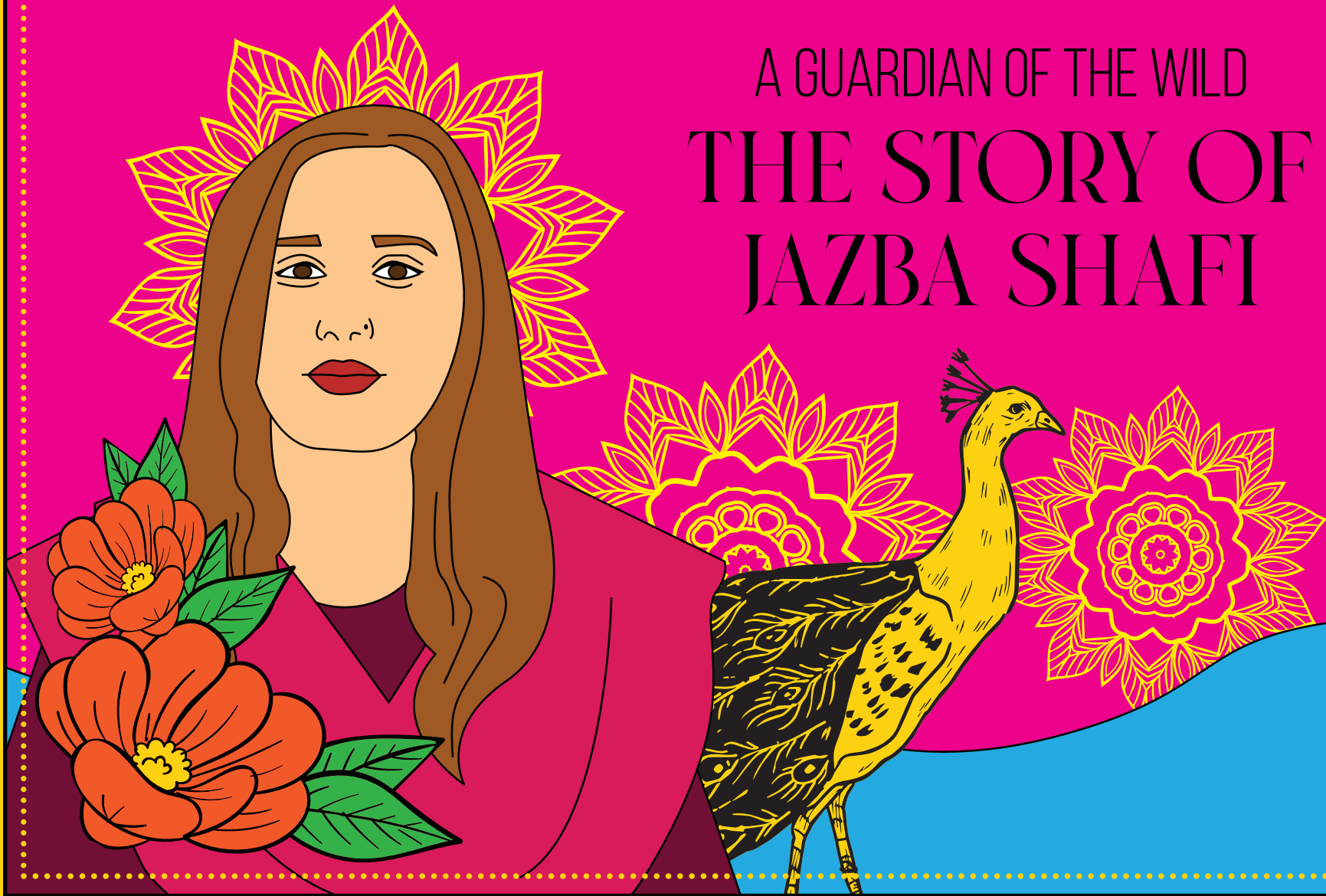
Her groundbreaking research has been recognized nationally and internationally. Shaista has presented her findings at major conferences like the Global Leopard Conference 2023 and the Pakistan Congress of Zoology. She has also published research articles in renowned journals, with studies focusing on topics like the genetic diversity of leopards and human-wildlife co-existence.

Through her leadership, Shaista has trained field staff, engaged local communities in conservation efforts, and worked closely with international organizations to ensure effective biodiversity management in AJ&K. She believes by building a network of dedicated conservationists and fostering partnerships, she can ensure the effective implementation of biodiversity management strategies in AJ&K.

As far as the challenges are concerned, of course, her journey hasn't been without hurdles. From navigating deceitful terrain to addressing the complexities of human-wildlife conflict, every day presents a new set of challenges. "Yet, it's the sense of fulfillment that drives me forward – knowing that my work is making a tangible difference in the preservation of our natural heritage. It is fulfilling and I love my work and the wonders of nature I get to explore and experience."

"It's a privilege to work in harmony with nature," she reflects. "My work is a testament to the beauty and majesty of our natural world, and I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to contribute to its conservation."

A GUARDIAN OF THE WILD
**THE STORY OF
JAZBA SHAFI**



Name: Jazba Shafi

Designation: Range Officer

Department: Wildlife & Fisheries Department AJ&K

In the breathtaking valleys of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), where towering mountains and dense forests guard age-old secrets, one woman has dedicated her life to protecting the wilderness. Jazba Shafi is the daughter of Muzaffarabad and has an unwavering love for nature.

Jazba has a Master's degree in Zoology and has been working for the last 10 years for wildlife conservation, and her journey didn't begin with grand ambitions. She started as a laboratory assistant in AJK's Department of Wildlife, a modest role that offered a glimpse into the world from which she would soon become inseparable. But the boundaries of an office could never hold her restless spirit. The wild was calling, and she answered.

Over time, Jazba traded laboratory walls for forest trails, becoming a familiar face in the villages, valleys, and conservation sites of AJK. As a social mobilizer and now a Range Officer, she discovered that true conservation isn't just about policies or patrols, it's about people.

In classrooms filled with students, or sitting cross-legged with villagers under the shade of ancient trees, Jazba carried the same message: "These forests, these animals, these rivers aren't just part of the landscape; they are part of who we are."

Understanding that awareness begins at the grassroots, Jazba created pamphlets, slogan boards, and information cards in local languages. These simple tools found their way onto city noticeboards and village walls, quietly sparking conversations about wildlife and the environment in places often overlooked.

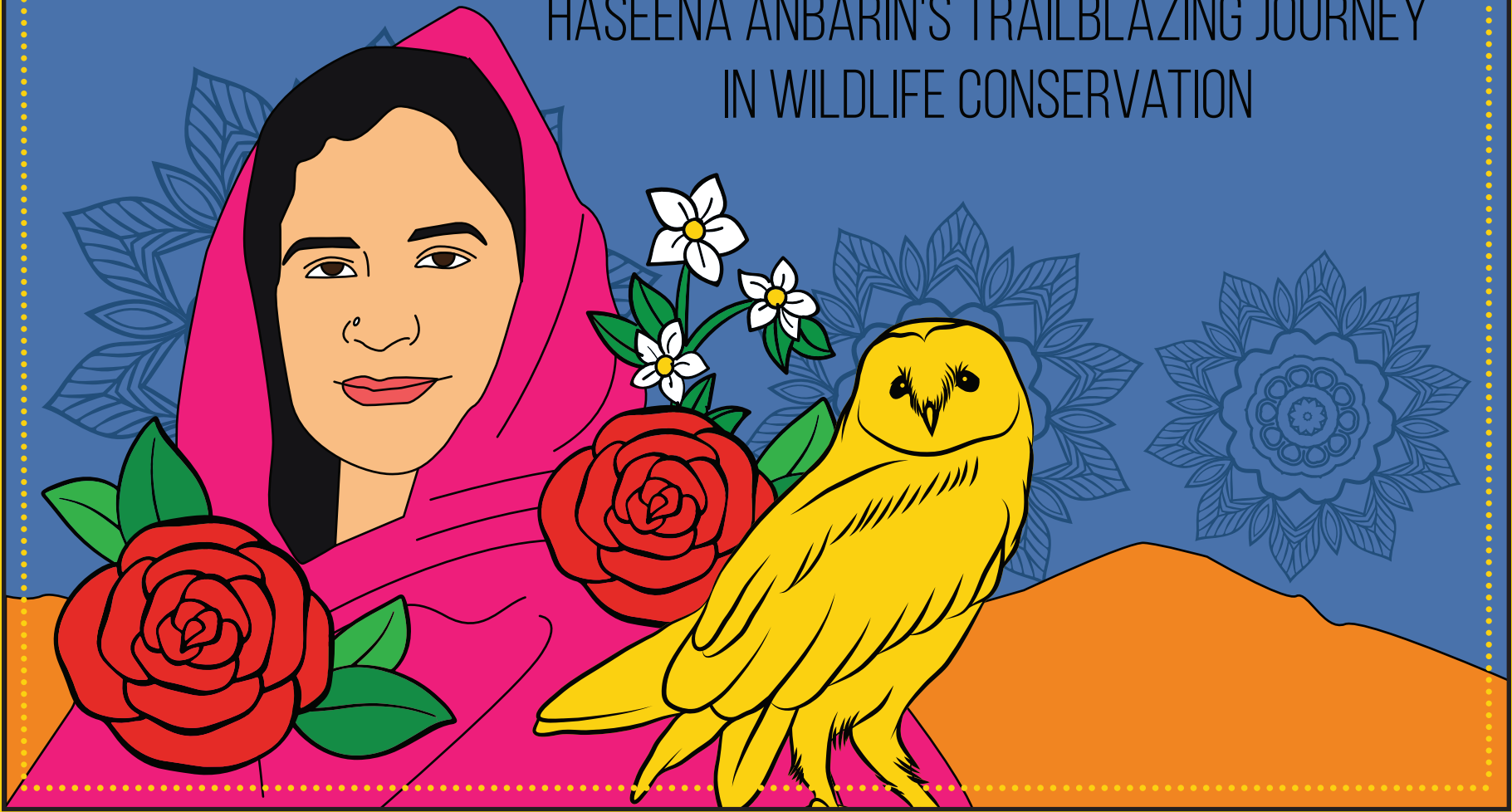
Her work has taken her across diverse terrains, coordinating plantation drives, responding to poaching alerts, organizing biodiversity festivals, and even rescuing injured animals. She recalls one freezing January night when reports of illegal hunting reached her. By 2 AM, wrapped in layers but fueled by determination, she led her team into Thoor Forest. The poachers were caught, but for Jazba, it wasn't about punishment; it was about protecting a fragile balance that sustains both wildlife and communities. What sets Jazba apart isn't just her courage but her belief that conservation must be rooted in compassion and collaboration. Through community events, educational campaigns, and partnerships, she has shown that protecting nature is not a solitary battle but a shared responsibility.

Beyond the forests, Jazba represents AJK on national and international platforms, briefing foreign delegations, engaging with the media, and using social media to share stories of rescued animals and grassroots conservation. Her work quietly challenges the idea that protecting nature is a distant, abstract cause; it's woven into daily life. Behind the scenes, she drafts proposals, pens training manuals, and develops plans that aim for lasting change. Each sapling planted, each child inspired, each rescued animal is a reminder that hope grows, one small action at a time.

She is a true inspiration for the young generation to follow her path and work for the conservation efforts.

BREAKING BARRIERS

HASEENA ANBARIN'S TRAILBLAZING JOURNEY
IN WILDLIFE CONSERVATION



Name: Haseena Anbarin

Designation: Deputy Inspector General of Forests

Department: Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Islamabad

Haseena Anbarin serves as the Deputy Inspector General of Forests at the Federal Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination. A qualified forester and a passionate nature conservationist, Haseena is among the pioneering women to join wildlife departments in Pakistan. She spent over 15 years with the KP Wildlife Department, contributing to in-situ wildlife conservation and promoting conservation education across the region. Her work has consistently emphasized the protection of biodiversity and fostering awareness among local communities. Haseena recently represented Pakistan's wildlife rangers at the prestigious World Ranger Congress in France, showcasing their vital role in the conservation effort.

Growing up in Bannu, Haseena's fascination with the natural world was ignited by her father's enchanting tales of the forest and its incredible creatures. Growing up amidst her family's vegetable gardens and crop fields, she developed a deep connection to the land that would later define her life's mission. This profound exposure sparked a passion that would drive her to pursue a Master's degree in Forestry, setting the stage for her remarkable career in wildlife conservation.

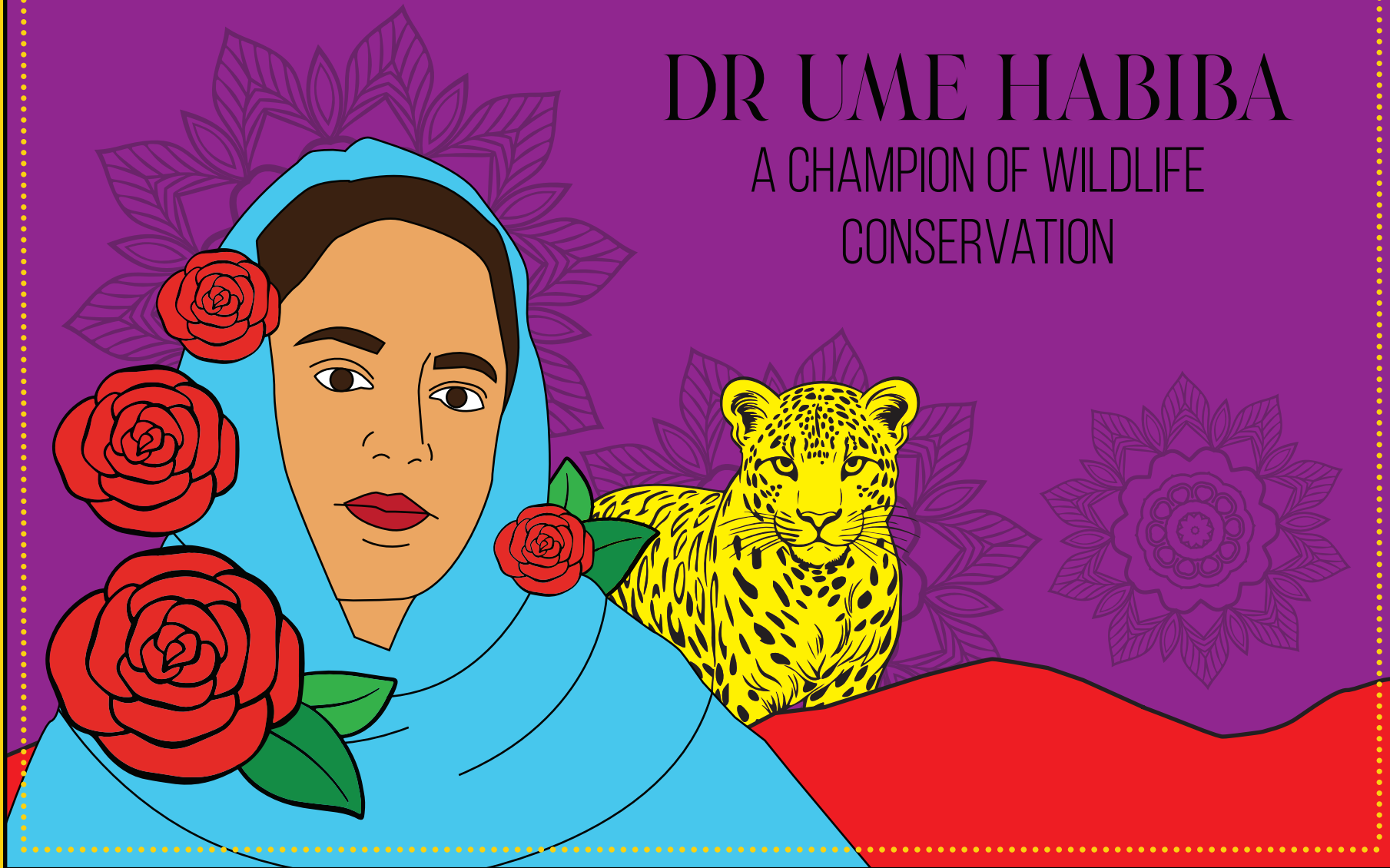
In 2008, Haseena shattered gender barriers by becoming the first female officer in the KP Wildlife Department. Her determination and perseverance paved the way for other women to follow in her footsteps. Today, she is a role model and inspiration to many, including the three women who have joined the department since her pioneering entry.

Throughout her illustrious career, Haseena has exemplified unwavering commitment and expertise in conservation and natural resource management. She has worked tirelessly to inspect and evaluate wildlife projects, develop conservation plans, mobilize communities, and resolve human-wildlife conflicts. Her achievements are a testament to her dedication and resilience in the face of adversity.

Haseena's journey, however, has not been without challenges. As a woman breaking into a male-dominated profession, she faced skepticism, mistrust, and cultural resistance. Yet, her unwavering determination and exceptional performance won her the respect and admiration of her colleagues. Her experiences underscore the need for stronger mechanisms to prevent harassment and ensure a safe and supportive work environment for women.

DR UME HABIBA

A CHAMPION OF WILDLIFE
CONSERVATION



Name: *Dr Ume Habiba*

Designation: *Deputy Director Wildlife*

Department: *Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB)*

Dr. Um-e-Habiba serves as the Deputy Director of Wildlife at the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB), where she oversees the management of Margalla Hills National Park and wildlife conservation efforts within the federal capital territory. Dr. Ume Habiba has spent 13 remarkable years working tirelessly to safeguard the natural world. Her team's primary focus on protection and poaching control is a daunting task, but one she undertakes with unwavering commitment. Under her leadership, her team undertakes diverse activities including visitor management, wildlife research, human-wildlife conflict resolution, and managing critical challenges such as forest fires and the conservation of species like the Common Leopard. She previously served on the faculty at Haripur University, where she specialized in wildlife and forest management, further solidifying her expertise in natural resource conservation.

The IWMB aims to provide a haven for wildlife and ensure their protection in their natural habitats, particularly the Margalla Hills National Park. Their mission focuses on rehabilitation and preservation, maintaining the highest standards of care for critically endangered species. The IWMB's Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre, established at the former Islamabad Zoo site, has been operational since 2020, following the zoo's closure after a landmark Islamabad High Court decision. The centre has rescued over 500 animals and birds, including black bears, leopards, pangolins, freshwater turtles, and various birds of prey. Many have been successfully rehabilitated and released back into their natural habitats.

Currently, more than 100 species are undergoing treatment and recovery at the IWMB Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre. The IWMB's work extends beyond rehabilitation, playing a pivotal role in combating wildlife abuse and trafficking and protecting endangered species.

As a woman in a male-dominated field, Dr. Habiba has faced numerous challenges. However, she has transformed these hurdles into opportunities for growth and resilience. She has harnessed them as opportunities to grow, learn, and become a stronger, more resilient advocate for wildlife conservation. Her work has taken her to breathtaking destinations, from majestic mountains to lush forests, allowing her to encounter incredible creatures and touch the lives of people and communities. Reflecting on her journey, Dr. Habiba takes pride in knowing that her efforts have not only safeguarded ecosystems but have also inspired countless others to join the cause.

To young women and girls aspiring to make a difference in wildlife conservation, Dr. Habiba's message is clear: "Never give up on your dreams. Pursue your passion with determination and perseverance. The journey will not be easy, but it will be worth it." As Dr. Habiba continues on her journey, she remains filled with hope and optimism. Together, she believes we can make a difference, protecting and preserving the natural world for generations to come. Her story serves as a powerful inspiration, reminding us that one person can drive meaningful change and create a lasting impact in the world.



AYESHA SHEHZAD

A VOICE FOR THE VOICELESS

Name: *Ayesha Shehzad*

Designation: *Assistant Director Wildlife*

Department: *Islamabad Wildlife Management Board*

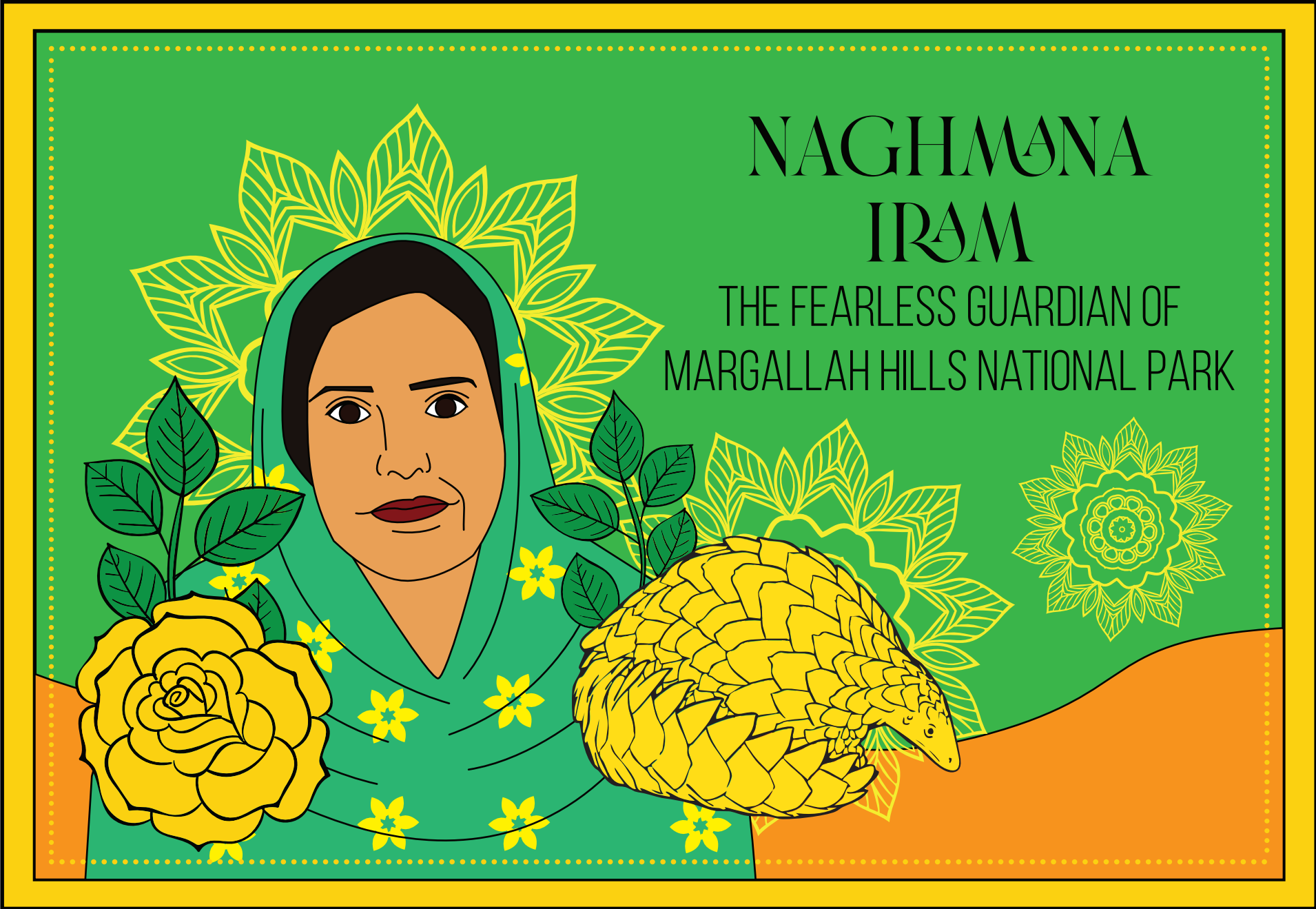
In the quiet beauty of Islamabad's Margalla Hills National Park, Ayesha Shehzad walks with purpose. As Assistant Director of Wildlife at the IWMB, she has dedicated her life to protecting animals and the spaces they call home. Margalla Hills National Park is home to some of Pakistan's rare and magnificent species, including the common leopard, barking deer, and indian pangolin. However, it is also a favorite destination for visitors, whose presence often brings challenges like littering and disturbances to the fragile ecosystem. Ayesha's work involves striking a delicate balance between conservation and human activity, ensuring that the park remains a sanctuary for both wildlife and people.

Ayesha's work is not just about stopping poaching or enforcing laws. It's about spreading awareness and building a connection between people and wildlife. Her mission is to ensure that animals have the same right to live and thrive as humans do, and she believes this can only happen when people care enough to make a change. She actively engages with park visitors, educating them on the importance of preserving the park's ecosystem and the role they can play in protecting its inhabitants. From organizing clean-up drives to conducting workshops for youth, Ayesha tirelessly works to foster a sense of responsibility and stewardship among the community.

Ayesha's journey in the wildlife field is driven by a singular purpose: to create awareness among people about the rights of animals. She advocates that these magnificent creatures have just as much right to thrive as humans do. It is our responsibility to protect their habitats, preserve their populations, and ensure their well-being.

For Ayesha, wildlife conservation is not merely a job—it's a calling. She is determined to be a voice for the voiceless, to stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves. Ayesha wants to inspire a sense of compassion, empathy, and responsibility in her community so that they can work together to safeguard the future of the planet's precious wildlife.

As Ayesha continues on this journey, she is filled with hope and determination. She knows it won't be easy, but she is willing to face every challenge head-on. Ayesha believes that together, we can make a difference. Her vision is of a world where humans and animals coexist harmoniously, and the rights of all creatures are upheld. Ayesha Shehzad's story is a testament to the transformative power of passion, dedication, and compassion. Her journey not only inspires others to join the fight for wildlife conservation but also serves as a call to action for all who believe in the rights of the planet's incredible creatures. Together, she believes, we can make a difference—creating a future where every voice, human or animal, is heard and respected.



NAGHMANA IRAM

THE FEARLESS GUARDIAN OF
MARGALLAH HILLS NATIONAL PARK

Name: *Naghmana Iram*

Designation: *Wildlife Ranger*

Department: *Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB)*

In the majestic Margallah Hills National Park, a brave and dedicated wildlife ranger, Naghmana, patrols the trails with unwavering passion. Armed with a Master's degree and a steadfast commitment to conservation, she joined the IWMB in April 2022. Her mission is clear: to safeguard the vulnerable common leopard's habitat and preserve the park's breathtaking beauty.

Inspired by Rizwana's success, Naghmana embarked on this challenging yet rewarding role. Her work is as diverse as it is impactful-educating visitors about the park's ecological importance, enforcing conservation laws, and serving as a guide for foreign tourists. With a keen eye for detail, she searches visitors' bags for plastic, promoting a plastic-free environment and protecting the park's delicate ecosystem.

What sets Naghmana apart is her ability to build trust and connect with local women, who play a vital role in the sustainable management of natural resources. Her presence not only bridges the gap between communities and conservation efforts but also empowers women to take an active role in environmental stewardship. In a society where women's roles in conservation are often overlooked, Naghmana's work shines a light on the transformative impact women can have in protecting the environment.

Despite facing numerous challenges, Naghmana's courage, resilience, and dedication make her a true champion of conservation. By shattering stereotypes and demonstrating the vital role women can play in environmental protection, she paves the way for a brighter, more sustainable future. Naghmana's story serves as a powerful reminder that, together, we can create a brighter future for all.

DEFYING CONVENTION

TASNEEM MURTAZA'S JOURNEY
TO REDEFINE SUCCESS



Name: *Tasneem Murtaza*

Designation: *Zoologist*

Department: *Zoological Survey of Pakistan (MoCC & EC)*

In a world where societal expectations often define a woman's journey, Tasneem Murtaza has broken the mold. With unwavering passion and dedication, she has shattered stereotypes, proving that women can excel in all spheres of life. As a wife, mother, daughter, and daughter-in-law, Tasneem has navigated the complexities of family life while pursuing her dreams with unyielding determination.

Tasneem's academic foundation in Zoology, coupled with her MSc and ongoing M Phil pursuits, has equipped her with the expertise to excel in her field. Over seven years as a Zoologist with the Zoological Survey of Pakistan (MoCC & EC), Tasneem has achieved remarkable milestones, solidifying her status as a leading Wildlife Biologist.. Despite facing logistical challenges and working in remote areas with minimal resources, Tasneem's resilience and dedication shine through, showcasing her commitment to preserving Pakistan's natural heritage.

Tasneem's story exemplifies her ability to effortlessly balance multiple roles. As a mother of three, she has navigated the challenges of parenthood while maintaining a successful career. Her experience as a Ranger has further honed her skills, allowing her to make a meaningful impact on wildlife conservation.

Tasneem's definition of success is not limited by societal expectations. Instead, she has carved her path, one marked by resilience, determination, and an unwavering commitment to her passions. Her journey serves as a powerful reminder that success is not a one-size-fits-all concept but rather a personal and evolving definition unique to each individual.

Tasneem Murtaza's story is a beacon of inspiration, encouraging women and girls everywhere to forge their paths and redefine success on their terms. As we celebrate Tasneem's achievements, we are reminded that success is not just about achieving milestones, but about embracing our individuality and living life on our terms.

NAJMA RASHEED

A GUARDIAN OF PAKISTAN'S
WILDLIFE



Name: *Najma Rasheed*

Designation: *Wildlife Preservation Officer*

Department: *Zoological Survey of Pakistan (MoCC & EC)*

Najma Rasheed, a dedicated Wildlife Preservation Officer at the Zoological Survey of Pakistan, has devoted her life to protecting the rich biodiversity of Pakistan. From an early age, Najma was captivated by the beauty of the natural world. This passion blossomed into a career rooted in purpose and driven by a deep sense of responsibility. As a woman in this field, Najma has faced her share of challenges. The physical demands, isolation, and occasional danger can be daunting. Yet, Najma's courage and determination have never wavered. She credits the unwavering support of her family and colleagues as her bedrock, empowering her to rise above these obstacles and continue her vital work. Their belief in her fuels her determination to safeguard Pakistan's wildlife and its habitats.

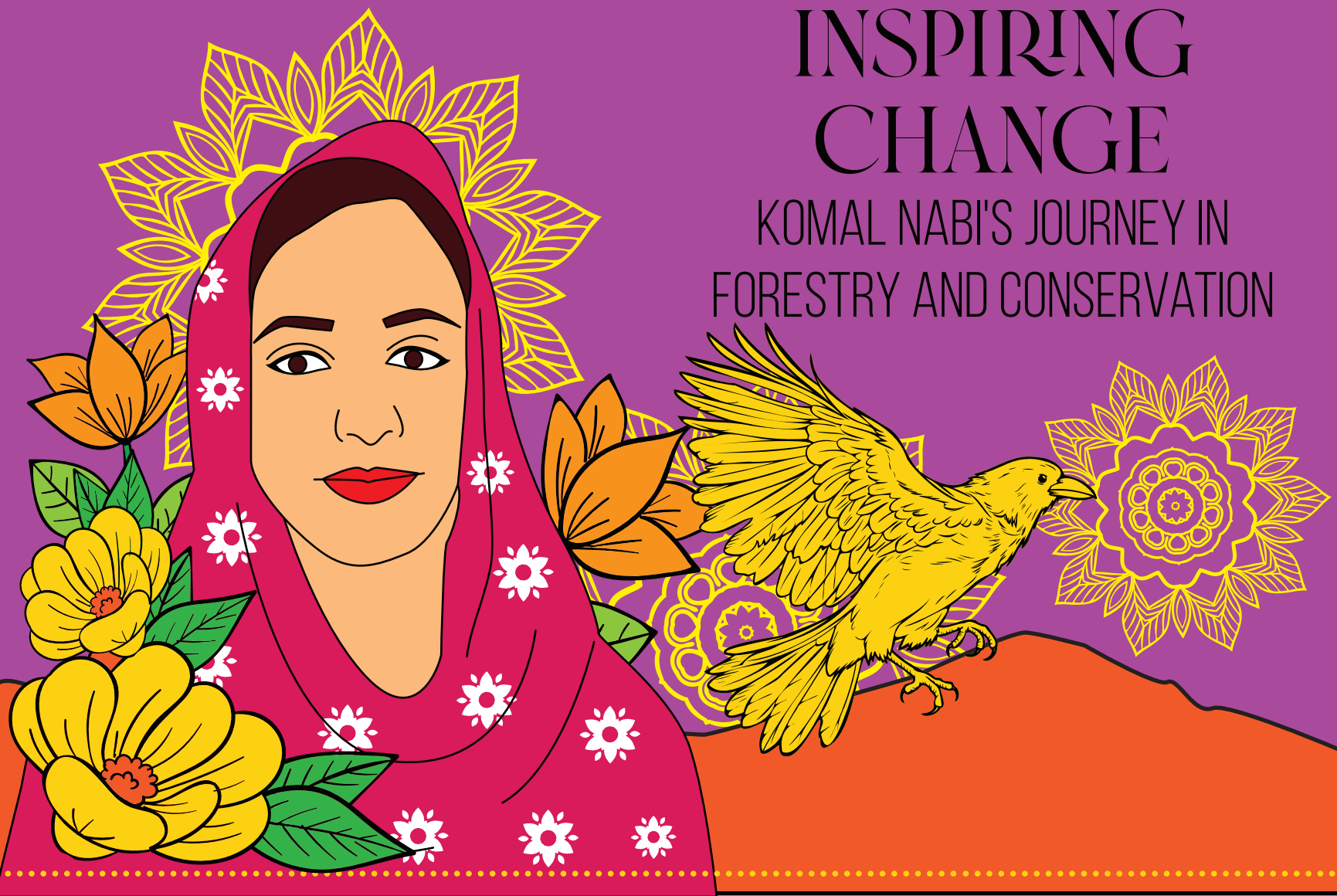
Najma's journey as a wildlife preservation officer has taken her to diverse landscapes across Pakistan, from the rugged mountains of KP to the vast deserts of Sindh. Each expedition has been a unique adventure, filled with excitement, unexpected hurdles, and invaluable lessons.

Najma's role is not without its logistical hurdles. The lack of adequate facilities in remote areas remains a significant challenge for conservation officers. Reflecting on her experience in the Cholistan Desert, where she conducted a survey tracking the elusive Chinkara, Najma shares: "Spending nights under the starlit sky was a magical experience, but the absence of basic amenities was a test of endurance."

These experiences have shaped Najma into a stronger, more compassionate individual. She has learned to appreciate the beauty of nature, the importance of conservation, and the power of the human spirit. Najma hopes to inspire other women to pursue their dreams despite obstacles. As a ranger, Najma strongly believes that women rangers are the guardians of the planet's future. "We are the protectors of the natural world," she says, "and our work is crucial to preserving the delicate balance of our ecosystems." Najma is proud to be part of a community dedicated to safeguarding the planet's future.

INSPIRING CHANGE

KOMAL NABI'S JOURNEY IN
FORESTRY AND CONSERVATION



Name: *Komal Nabi*

Designation: *Range Forest Officer (RFO) & Additional Charge of Sub-Divisional Forest Officer (SDFO), Ghizer Forest Division*

Department: *Forest and Wildlife Department, Gilgit-Baltistan*

Komal Nabi's journey as a Range Forest Officer in the forest department is one of passion and dedication. Currently holding the additional charge of Sub-Divisional Forest Officer in the Ghizer Forest Division, Komal's love for forestry runs deep. Her inspiration came from her late father, a respected Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), whose commitment to conserving nature left a lasting impact on her.

Growing up, Komal admired her father's work and knew she wanted to follow in his footsteps. She pursued her passion with determination, earning a B.Sc. and M.Sc. in Forestry, as well as an M.Phil. in Environmental Science. Her hard work paid off in 2022 when she cleared the FPSC examination and was appointed as a Range Forest Officer (RFO) in Puniyal Ishkoman on May 20, 2022.

Within two years, Komal's dedication and expertise earned her the additional responsibility of Sub-Divisional Forest Officer (SDFO) in District Ghizer. She has worked on critical projects like the GLOF-II Project, which addresses the risks of glacial lake outburst floods, and the Ten Billion Tree Tsunami Programme (TBTP), Pakistan's largest afforestation initiative. Through these projects, Komal has contributed significantly to land restoration, biodiversity conservation, and community engagement in sustainable forestry.

As a woman in a traditionally male-dominated field, Komal has faced her share of challenges. She has had to prove herself repeatedly, demonstrating that women can excel in leadership roles in conservation. Despite the harsh terrains, tough fieldwork, and long hours, Komal's passion for protecting forests drives her forward.

What motivates Komal the most is knowing that every tree protected and every forest restored brings us closer to a better and more sustainable future. She sees herself not only as a guardian of forests but also as a trailblazer for women in this field. For Komal, protecting forests is not just a job; it's a shared responsibility for tomorrow.

Through her work, Komal continues to break barriers and inspire others, leaving a lasting impact on the environment and the community. Her story is a testament to the power of dedication, passion, and perseverance in making a difference.

WOMEN IN CONSERVATION

BREAKING BARRIERS AND BUILDING A
SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



Name: *Zainab Wazir*

Designation: *Range Forest Officer*

Department: *Forest and Wildlife Department, Gilgit-Baltistan*

Zainab Wazir's journey is one of passion, perseverance, and dedication. As a Range Forest Officer in the Wildlife Department of Gilgit-Baltistan, she has been making a difference since 2021. With a Master's degree in Forestry, Zainab was determined to protect the natural beauty of her homeland. As the first female officer inducted into the Forest and Wildlife Department, she broke barriers and paved the way for others.

Growing up in the breathtaking mountains of Gilgit-Baltistan ignited Zainab's love for nature. She realized that forests and wildlife are not just resources, but lifelines for communities and ecosystems. Over the past six years, Zainab has dedicated herself to forestry and wildlife conservation, focusing on protecting biodiversity and combating climate change.

Her experience as a Monitoring Forest Officer in the Ten Billion Tree Tsunami Programme under the Ministry of Climate Change in Islamabad was invaluable. She monitored reforestation sites, assessed survival rates of saplings, and ensured accountability in plantation drives. Zainab's work is diverse and challenging, from monitoring forest growth and preventing illegal logging to protecting wildlife habitats and raising awareness about conservation.

Despite facing skepticism and isolation early in her career, Zainab used these challenges as motivation. She proved through hard work and results that women can excel in this field. One of her most fulfilling moments was seeing schoolchildren plant trees with excitement and pride. "That moment reminded me that we're not just planting trees, we're planting hope," she says.

As a trailblazer, Zainab feels a responsibility to inspire other women to pursue careers in conservation. For Zainab, conservation is not a choice; it's a necessity. Forests and wildlife are essential for clean air, fresh water, climate stability, and human survival. She believes that each one of us can play a role in protecting the planet, whether by planting a tree, reducing waste, or supporting conservation efforts.

Zainab's vision is a world where people live in harmony with nature, where forests thrive, wildlife flourishes, and women stand equally in protecting our planet. She dreams of seeing more women in conservation leadership roles and contributing to projects that connect conservation with sustainable livelihoods for local communities. Through her story, Zainab hopes to inspire young women to pursue their passion for nature and conservation, reminding them that they belong wherever they choose to be. Her message to the world is simple yet powerful: every action counts, and together, we can make a difference.



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