

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE INSTRUCTOR REPLACED AFTER FIRST WEEK OF CLASSES

by Humza Siddique

Dr. Yasir Mehmood, the instructor for Introduction to Artificial Intelligence, was replaced in the third session of the Spring 20th semester, after complaints by students during the first week of classes.

Dr. Mehmood announced the course outline on the first day of class, 21st January 2020. He suggested the weightages for the grading instruments as follows:

- 1- 70% Final Exam
- 2- 15% Attendance and Class Participation
- 3- 15% Presentations

There were no assignments. The reason given by Sir, as quoted by students, was that students would copy each other's assignments. Dr. Mehmood also mentioned that checking assignments would be difficult for a class size of more than 150 students. Moreover, there were objections to the suggested CP policy too, "Five students would be randomly chosen for questions and they would be graded. The rest would get full marks for the day," said Hannan Naem '21.

"Students took the proposed outline jokingly and clapped in class but once they realized the weightages were final, they complained about them to Dr. Ihsan Ayyub Qazi, The Chair of the Computer Science Department", said Nauman Yawar Butt '21.

Apart from this, there were complaints in previous semesters about Dr. Mehmood being late to class. In fact, he was not able to make it to class for the second session on 23rd January, 2020. The LMS announcements for the day communicated his delay as students waited for more than thirty-five minutes before the class was cancelled. Dr. Mehmood's email at 2:52 PM mentioned that "the cricket match cut him an excuse to call it off for the day."

This incident led to even more complaints and as a result, the department was quick to intervene. Dr. Mian Muhammad Awais replaced Dr. Mehmood to teach the course from 28th January, 2020 onwards. Dr. Mehmood's office has been vacated but the name-plate remains visible on the office door.

Readers' Editor

In keeping with the internationally recognised practice of journalism, The Post has its own internal ombudsman - The Post Reader. The idea is to attend to our readers' complaints and respond to them professionally. PRE is the investigative authority, to which all complaints are referred, and it is PRE who takes notice of any alleged violations of Post's code of ethics

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INTL LUMS STUDENT QUARANTINED IN RIYADH ON HER FLIGHT BACK HOME

SUSPICIONS OF COVID-19 AFFECTED PIA'S FLIGHT TO JEDDAH AS ALL PASSENGERS WERE QUARANTINED IN RIYADH FOR TWO WEEKS.



Passengers from the PIA flight being led out of the airport to Golden Tulip hotel, where they will be kept in isolation for 2 weeks

By Maira Asaad and Humza Siddique

Following the closure of LUMS, students booked flights to return to their respective homes for a mandated isolation period. Mahnoor Ismail '21, an undergraduate student at LUMS, was one of the international students set to return to her home in Jeddah, Saudia Arabia.

On March 15, the day of Ismail '21's flight, the government of Saudia Arabia announced a suspension of all international flights for the next two weeks. Only residents were allowed to fly back to the country.

Expecting to return to Jeddah that day, Ismail '21 was concerned when, upon landing at Riyadh's King Khalid International Airport, passengers were not allowed to depart for their homes. A mandatory screening for the virus followed - passengers were asked to fill in COVID-19 screening forms after they landed at the airport in Riyadh.

"We didn't know what would happen. They [the airport officials] were mostly Arab and very few of them could talk in English. Eventually, I found comfort with the women. There were just four ladies with families in an otherwise male-dominated group of passengers."

To add to the anxiety of the situation, she added, "I didn't have any Riyals on me, and my [phone's] battery was low."

After 12 hours of delays and little communication, the passengers were transported to Golden Tulip, a 4-star hotel in Riyadh, where they were told they would be kept for the next two weeks in quarantine under government mandated orders. All expenses for the duration of the stay would be footed by the KSA government. Meanwhile, passengers

would be tested for COVID-19.

"The test was pretty disgusting. I knew what to expect because I'd seen a video online."

To get tested, all the passengers were called into a testing area in the hotel, where they would form a queue. Both masks and gloves were worn as precautionary measures, though no distance between individuals has been specified.

According to Ismail '21, the results, returned days after their arrival in Riyadh, have indicated that all passengers tested negative for the virus.

Ismail '21 says she's kept busy in the conventional ways, "I eat, I watch shows on Netflix, I waste around time. I call people. I call my Mom, and my Chachu calls me every day."

She adds: "I also want to sing. I love singing when I'm alone, but the walls aren't very soundproof. I can't sing because I don't want other people to

hear me. I've learned how to juggle,

though! It took me 4 hours to learn." Scheduled items in her day look like this: breakfast, lunch and dinner are delivered to her room at 8 a.m, 2 p.m and 7 p.m. respectively. On the daily, around 9 a.m, a woman comes in to take her temperature. The routine has taken its toll on Ismail '21:

"Last night, I felt like I was losing my mind. The only interaction I have is with the person who brings me food, and he changes every day."

Interaction, naturally, has been limited. Beyond answering the door, and receiving items from visiting family members in the lobby, where a distance has to be maintained, Ismail '21 has been alone. Despite the solitude, she is attempting to make the best of her situation. "I'm taking comfort in the fact that even if it isn't the best case scenario, it's still better than most. I have three meals a day, I have my family living 15 minutes away, even if I can't meet them physically," she says.

Ismail '21 has also been documenting

pass time, but certain responses to her situation have been frustrating for her.

"People felt sorry for me being alone. They were replying by saying that they would have gone insane if it were them. I clearly did not look insane, so why were they mentioning that on [Instagram]? ... Why would you bring up the not-positive part to me when I'm trying to stay positive?"

But amidst wrestling with what are now the globally shared challenges of isolation, the situation has brought Ismail '21 an unexpected companion. She mentions having made friends with an elderly woman, Arifa Nasreen who sat next to Ismail '21 her flight.

"I called her in her hotel room, and she said that she was bechain (uneasy). I told her she could talk to me whenever she wanted to." Since then, the two have been in frequent communication with each other, although none of the passengers step out for physical interactions over fears of the virus.

As the pandemic grows across the globe and more countries shut down for indefinite periods of time, the uncertainty of extended periods of isolation stir further anxiety. "I'm just really looking forward to going back home," Ismail '21 said.

Mahnoor Ismail '21 is still at Riyadh, completing her two weeks of isolation, before she can return home to her family. Another test will be conducted before the release.

LUMS SOCIETIES GO ONLINE

By Zoha Fareed Chishti

Social distancing seems to be the order of the day, with the Coronavirus Pandemic impacting everyday life globally. The student council has developed an Online Activities Program, in the hope that it would help ease and aid social distancing for the Lums Community. We reached out to Abdullah Haroon '21, General Secretary of the Student Council. Haroon explained that the idea was developed in order to motivate the Lums community to socially isolate, after there was an exponential increase in the number of Coronavirus cases in Pakistan. He said, "We (the student council) hoped to provide students online activities, similar to what they are used to on Campus, which would help them stay at home during this time."

In addition to that, Haroon also mentioned the need to reduce panic was one of the motivating factors behind this program. He explained that, "Since the students had nothing to do, they were constantly hitting 'refresh' and scavenging for details and updates, which only induced panic. These activities will hopefully serve as a distraction."

Haroon further mentioned that the Student Council had taken to discuss this idea with the Vice Chancellor, who also expressed his enthusiasm towards this program. Haroon recalled a statement made by the VC, "In situations of uncertainty, only those people who learn to adapt are the ones who survive." It was precisely this thought that triggered the development of these Online Programs. Haroon explained that the Student Council believed that if courses can move online, our societies can also adapt accordingly.

The pilot phase of the Program has been initiated already, under which three activities have been introduced. The registration is open, and the link is available on Lums Discussion Forum.

LUMS eSports Club (with ESL)- A PUBG Mobile Cup has been announced. All proceeds from the tournament will go to Charities acquiring rations for families in need.

LUMS Book Club (with PLUMS)

Health and Fitness Classes (With LUMS Shredded)

The Student Council is testing the response from these activities and hopes to expand the Online Activities Program, by involving the remaining societies as well.

Haroon, as a parting note, mentioned that these activities are the way to show that LUMS is not just a campus, but rather the ideals and the values we all hold close as a community. He explained that, "Just because the campus is closed, that shouldn't mean that we are all away from LUMS. We are still one community, which will be seen through these activities."

While the times may be challenging, we all must do our part by acting responsibly. Here's to a socially distant, but a virtually close LUMS community.

HOW CURRENT TESTS WORK

- 1 A swab is taken of the inside of a patient's nose or the back of their throat. This sample is then sent to a lab to test.
- 2 The RNA of the virus is extracted and purified. An enzyme, reverse transcriptase, converts the RNA to DNA.
- 3 The DNA is mixed with primers, sections of DNA designed to bind to characteristic parts of the virus DNA. Repeatedly heating then cooling DNA with these primers and a DNA-building enzyme makes millions of copies of virus DNA.
- 4 Fluorescent dye molecules bind to the virus DNA as it is copied. Binding makes them give off more light, which is used to confirm the presence of the virus in the sample.

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE TESTS

The fluorescence increases as more copies of the virus DNA are produced. If it crosses a certain threshold, the test is positive. If the virus isn't present, no DNA copies are made and the threshold isn't reached. In this case, the test is negative.

THE LUMS POST

FEATURES

THE LUMS POST

SUNDAY, APRIL 12TH, 2020

LUMS GEARS UP FOR ENERGY CONSERVATION IN THE NEW DECADE

By Humza Siddique and Muhammad Basit Khan

“Stagnation is not the answer” were the words of Dr. Nauman Zaffar, the head of the LUMS Conservation Committee. According to him, conservation of energy, water and the lush lawns has always been a top priority for LUMS. The Post sat down with Dr. Zaffar on a Saturday morning to discuss past conservation projects and the initiatives for the upcoming decade.

Lighting infrastructure has seen the most development since 2016 with the change from fluorescent tubes to LED lights. The Engineering School has motion sensors installed in most instructor offices, particularly in the Electrical Engineering Department’s wing, to prevent wastage by forgetting to switch off. LUMS has also been able to secure a reliable vendor for the LED lights and the benefit achieved in load reduction is huge. “Imagine this! The room we sit in would consume 800 Watts per hour if it were conventional lighting. That figure is now down to 160 Watts per hour,” said Mr. Farid (Team Lead Electric & HVAC (Engineering Facilities), as he typed on his calculator. Steadily, LUMS has fully replaced conventional lighting in the Library building, most of SSE and a major chunk of the Academic Block floors. After 25,000 light replacements till 2020, the result is an immense 443 kilowatts reduction in load, as quoted by the reports provided by Mr. Farid.

Dr. Zaffar also alluded to potentially greater load reduction for the main supply with developments in the area of renewable power production.

“We currently have 42 kilowatts of solar power capacity installed. You must have seen the solar panels on most roofs across campus.”

LUMS has also successfully negotiated a power-purchase agreement for an additional 320 kilowatts of solar capacity. Through a small tariff paid to the panel company during usage, LUMS will own the solar panels at an insignificant cost within ten years. However, Dr. Zaffar foresaw some problems in electricity production via renewables and wanted the community to understand it in detail.

“The issue here is a variable load and a variable source. The moment we have clouds, there will be a severe solar dip.” The plan, as he mentions, is to provide a shaded area in the carpark with solar panels. “Although, the angle of the sun is not ideal in the free-parking area, the shade would be very much welcomed.”

The third major development has been the replacement of forty-five conventional air conditioners in the dorms. This investment has already provided a positive return within eight months, according to Mr. Farid. Dr. Zaffar and Mr. Farid hope that the upcoming decade will allow for fifteen to eighteen percent reliance on solar power which comes extremely close to the international standard of twenty percent.

These developments do reflect in the consumption figures. The average monthly figure for electricity consumption on campus has remained around 3 MegaWatts since 2015. Mr. Farid mentioned that peak consumption was 3.6 MegaWatts in August 2019 since hostel residents come back for the Fall semester. However, the figure for monthly consumption still floats about 3

MegaWatts. Mr. Farid talked about how it seemed counter-intuitive considering an increasing influx of students with each new batch. The credit does go to these energy efficient appliances installed across campus.

LUMS also plans to do its part in the current water crisis. Dr. Zafar suggested a project to revamp pressure motors and pipes for controlled water flow. “The idea is to curtail flow of water so that it is adequate but not comfortable so that students are deterred from wastage. Mind you, conservation is not starvation!” This engineering solution will conserve excess energy involved in pumping water up to the top floors of hostels and academic buildings.

While discussing the energy consumption patterns on campus, Dr. Zafar also explained the minimum luminance level required on campus roads and within facilities.

The Post asked after consistently switched on lighting during the night time in SDSB, to which Mr. Farid responded, “The problem is that security protocol requires a lighting level that is sufficient for the monitoring cameras.”

Therefore, such losses were well-reasoned. Another major energy sink, identified by Dr. Zafar, was the loss of air conditioning/heating energy through the glass entrances and corridors of the SDSB and SSE buildings. He urged that these core consumption regions required self-discipline, even if students failed to pay attention to signs on the doors. In this context, Dr. Zafar empowered students to push for smart meter installation. This would grant respective academic departments a high level of granularity in terms of monitoring the consumption patterns. Greater transparency of figures would help improve campus areas lagging behind in conservation.

Another common theme amongst the discussion with both interviewees was the role of the student body at large. Dr. Zafar elaborated to The Post, a program currently under consideration by the department regarding active conservation measures. It involves implementing a color-coded system across campus, where stickers indicating the colors green, yellow, and red will be placed next to physical electrical switches. Green marks essentials that are meant to be switched on at all times and red would mean switch off whenever you pass by it. Yellow leaves room for devices that become inessential with change in the time of day.

“It’s a very simple, practical idea and potentially a very effective one,” remarked Dr. Zafar. Mr. Farid had a different experience with the students playing their part. “I’ve seen the carelessness in hostels myself in switching off appliances. Although, we were the same at our time. Perhaps it is the age...” However, he did hold expectations from students mindful of contemporary conservation values.

Dr. Zafar hopes to convene a talk on campus conservation initiatives and share the technicalities with the entire student body in hopes to go beyond constructive discussion. “The best thing about such projects is that a couple of passionate students engage in research and get wonderful theses out of it, while we continue to benefit on the conservation front.”

RATTU: THE CASE FOR THE “RESCUE”

AS THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC BRINGS ENFORCED SOCIAL ISOLATION INTO EFFECT, WE RECOUNT THE STORY OF THE 21 STUDENTS WHO WERE STRANDED IN RATTU EARLIER THIS YEAR AS A SOMEWHAT IRONIC FORESHADOWING OF THE CHALLENGES THAT ALL OF US, PARTICULARLY THE SENIOR BATCH OF 2020, FACE WITH THE SHUTTING DOWN OF CAMPUS.

by Maira Asaad & Syeda Aiman Zehra

On the 21st of January, 2020, following ten days of being locked in, 21 LUMS students were heli-lifted out of Rattu.

As one of LUMS Adventure Society’s (LAS) annual winter skiing trips, the group originally expected to stay at Rattu for five nights before returning home. However, when temperatures dropped to as low as -15°C , and unprecedented levels of snowfall prompted several avalanches to block all exits leading out from Rattu, things took a different turn. In addition, the S-COM (network providers) towers had been buried under the heavy snowfall, and for two days, communication from the affected areas came to a halt.

For the duration of the stay, the group remained at Army High Altitude School. During the communication blackout, the only way of gleaning information was either through the workers in the canteen, or through the group’s supervisor, Captain Talal, who also behaved as a spokesperson for the group.

“They [the canteen workers] gave us the impression that what was happening wasn’t normal,” Mahnoor Saeed ’20 said.

Contact was established after two days of silence, through a man in the Gilgit base who communicated to the students’ parents. “Communication was one-sided – we could hear what our parents were saying, but couldn’t talk directly to them. Our main priority was to reassure them that we were safe,” Rabia Tufail ’20 said.

Surrounded by knee-deep layers of snow, and extreme cold that restricted mobility mainly to the mess, and without Internet, the students entertained themselves with what was available: table tennis, Bollywood screenings on Zing! TV, Captain Talal’s collection of seasons (which included Modern Family, Two Broke Girls and House of Cards), and card games, amidst other activities.

There came a point where, on a night

when Laraib Hur ’20 played two episodes of FRIENDS that she had saved, the sound of the audio echoed throughout the mess. “We just sat and listened to the audio for two full episodes. At that point I felt like we’d really hit rock bottom,” Momin Dar ’20 recalls with a laugh.

Nights were filled with, among other things, games like “Never Have I Ever”, and sharing revealing secrets with friends. After a while, however, even that lost its charm.

“There’s only so many things you can share,” Saeed ’20 told The Post, with a resigned smile.

The prolonged stay, however, brought with it additional time on the slopes. “There were three skiing slopes and we originally only had time for the beginner slope, but because of the extra time and practice we got, we got promoted to the ‘Tatanka’ slope,” said Seemal Chattha ’20.

Captain Talal, and Mouaz Naeem ’21, who was the designated leader of the group and is a member of LAS, kept the group’s spirits raised by arranging a range activities, which involved two treks: a forest trek and a snow trek.

The destination for the snow trek was Mohsin Base, and along the way, they passed what was allegedly the last Ranjit Singh hut in the area.

The snow trek was attended by eight of the male students on the trip, and they were taught how to pave the path in knee-deep snow.

The forest trek had a similar learning experience for the students that opted to go on it, and had a more rudimentary skillset to offer: a lesson on the various kinds of ropes used by trekkers and climbers – the knowledge available, in part, because of how Rattu operated as a training base for Siachen soldiers.

Given that the group was able to manage the time easily, not everyone was convinced that the situation was dire enough to warrant a helicopter.

“The whole situation was blown out of proportion,” Momin Dar ’20 said. Naeem ’21 talked about his role in the situation. “There was pressure from some of the students, and their parents’, and my role was to keep them informed about the situation.” Naeem ’21 explained that he was responsible for conveying messages from the students to the man at the Gilgit exchange, who would forward them to the students’ parents.

While some students on the trip expressed concerns that they might have to stay in Rattu for another few weeks due to heavy snowfall, both Mouaz Naeem ’21 and Humayun Naeem ’20 were confident that they wouldn’t be staying back more than a few days. “We didn’t feel the need for a helicopter, to be honest. We might have stayed back two days at most.” They went on to add, “We weren’t stranded. We had three meals a day and plenty to eat.”

In fact, the initial itinerary of foods looked something like this: dodo soup, yak meat, Prince biscuits, jalebi, spaghetti, parathas, fried eggs, biryani, aloo chawal. As the days went by and supplies ran short, several varieties of daal, pulled out from storage, became a prominent feature of their meals – that, and one disputed bottle of achaar.

Akhtar ’20 also echoed similar sentiments, “We had it good, we had our heaters; and the army reassured us that even if we were stuck there for two months, we had everything we needed. There was no urgency.” She went on to add, however, in a different vein than some, “Yes, we needed it [the helicopter]. The day we returned, the snowfall was heavy. I felt like we would have been stuck there till the end of February.”

Despite the army’s hospitality, many students could not escape feelings of dread and uncertainty. Akhtar ’20 reflected on how spirits dampened in the coming days.

“It was all white, and we were waking up to the same people. It felt like Big

Boss chal raha hai.”

At the same time, there were others who were feeling the press of time.

“A lot of us were worried about missing our enrolment, but even more pressing than that were the college and job application deadlines that were fast approaching,” said Chattha ’20.

Following these concerns, on Sunday, 19th January, a day before the start of Spring Semester ’20, Saeed ’20 contacted the Student Council, herself being a council member. Faiza Shibli ’20 was chosen to take over the situation and stay in contact with the administration to ensure that prompt action was taken.

Efforts were made on all ends to reach out to contacts in the military. Colonel Amer was also involved. Shibli ’20 told The Post that he contacted the DG ISPR who then managed to track the exact location of the students. “After that, we just waited for the helicopter to reach them and bring them to a safe point,” said Shibli ’20.

On the morning the group was expecting the helicopter, further delays aggravated the group’s anxiety about returning to their homes. When the helicopter did arrive, several hours later, expressions of joy and relief abounded. From there, they were flown to the base in Gilgit, and met by the General Officer Commanding Gilgit, from where they were transported to Rawalpindi, and then to their homes.

“The people who were at the mess took such good care of us. The way the media said that we ‘rescued’ these students made it seem like we were pressed beneath the avalanche and had to be pulled out of it. The credit didn’t go to the people who took care of us, even though it wasn’t their job to look after us for more than three days,” Mahnoor Saeed ’20 said.



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EDITORIAL & OPINION

THE LUMS POST

SUNDAY, APRIL 12TH, 2020

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

RESPONSE OF FINANCIAL MARKETS IN LIGHT OF COVID-19

by Waleed Iqbal '20

The very first case of coronavirus (COVID-19) was identified in December 2019 in the city of Wuhan, China and since then it has transformed into a global pandemic. With the number of cases surpassing 400,000 and more than 15,000 deaths worldwide, coronavirus has now affected 192 countries. Due to its contagious nature, minimal public interaction is needed to prevent further spread. Therefore, nations around the globe are implementing lockdowns with spillover effects on economic activities across the globe.

Both developing and developed countries are more or less equally affected and financial markets are reflecting the damage done by the ongoing crisis. The stock market, a leading indicator of economic activity in various countries, has witnessed unprecedented crashes. Dow Jones Industrial Average, a dominant index in the United States, has lost more than 29% of its value since the virus was visible in the region. Consequently, in an attempt to stimulate economic growth, The Fed (Federal Reserve System in USA) has reduced the interest rate to almost zero. A similar scenario has been observed in European markets where FTSE (Financial Times Stock Exchange) index took a plunge of more than 24% and the Bank of England policed the policy rate to an all-time low of 0.1%. Developing markets, especially those in the Subcontinent, saw a more interesting happening. India, the second most populous country in the world, saw the BSE Sensex Index decline by more than 19%. Yet, the Reserve Bank of India is indecisive with regards to revising its monetary policy. As far as Pakistan is concerned PSX lost more than 27% of its value whereas State Bank of Pakistan's policy rate stood at a double-digit figure of 11% after being slashed by 225 basis points.[1]

It is globally evident that economies are experiencing a slump, although their responses to it differ considerably. Predominantly, it boils down to whether interest rate cuts will offset the tumble in economic activity caused by lockdowns. While the primary rationale behind an interest rate cut is to raise the current bar of consumption through lowered cost of borrowing and thereby extending purchasing power; it is vital to consider whether reduced purchasing power has mainly contributed to the current recession. It is not reduced purchasing power that is submerging economies but the inability of the public at large to conduct their economic affairs. The availability of funds at a negligible cost of borrowing would not result in a significant impact on the wider economy, as people are physically restricted from spending. Not only will this have an insignificant effect on the consumption of consumer goods, but the injection of capital goods into the economy will also be fairly limited. Given the prevailing uncertainty pertaining to halted production, investors are reluctant to expand their stake. Therefore, the anticipated impact of the interest rate cut may not be materialized. Moreover, slashing interest rates abnormally, as witnessed in developed economies, largely drives 'hot money' out of the economy.[2] But, as interest rates in such economies are inherently stable and low, it is not much of a concern for them as they are able to withstand it. However, in the case of developing countries where interest rates are relatively higher, lowering them could cause a considerable outflow of 'hot money', thereby potentially destabilizing the economy.

Two days ago, the IMF (International Monetary Fund) announced to temporarily suspend the debt repayments for developing nations. This may suggest arguing for interest rate cuts. However, the recent cuts have come at a cost of massive currency devaluation. For example, the 1.5% decrease in interest rate led to USD jumping to PKR 168, the highest ever. The British pound also climbed by 20 rupees in three days, despite maintaining a stable level earlier. In the last few weeks, this fluctuation has caused an overall plunge of 1490 million USD in the State Bank's reserve level. This, alongside the steep import bill, makes the downsides of searing interest rates far greater for developing countries than the advantage associated with limited rise in consumption.[3] It is worth mentioning though that the only considerable positivity with reduced policy rate could be observed in the health sector, if funds secured are channelized to upgrade the current healthcare system at large.

Therefore, slashing interest rates abnormally is nothing but to target the symptoms and not the causes.

[1] 100 basis points equal 1 percent

[2] Hot money refers to the capital that is frequently transferred from one economy to another in an attempt to maximize return from the highest prevailing interest rate.

[3] Consumption refers to consumer spending which drives inflation and GDP growth.

THE WORTH OF A WOMAN

by Imbesat Meer '20

As the Covid-19 pandemic takes the world by storm, life goes on, albeit slowly. With graduation looming over our heads, my peers and I are surrounded by countless uncertainties regarding the future, which are further aggravated with Covid-19 adding a dynamic factor to present and future circumstances. Even in a time of global panic and uncertainty, the desi aunties' decadence does not disappoint as they continue to focus on their favorite topic: Marriage.

In desi circles, the manner in which marriage is approached as a topic of discussion is in dire need of reformation. When this topic comes up, why is there no attempt to actually guide the youth on it through candid and open conversation rather than treating it as gossip? There is a blatant lack of guidance on what one should and should not expect and want from a life partner and marriage, on a general level and on a personalized level. Without such guidance, how would the youth (having no prior experience in the domain), know what to seek or accept when considering prospective life partners. There must be discussions on compatibility, companionship, and the dos and don'ts of marriages in an educated and refined manner. It is imperative to remember that with divorce still treated largely as a big no-no, marriage is a decision we must stick by for a lifetime.

Consider the abysmal state of current marriage criterions: A person's marriage worth is judged by evergreen factors, such as a woman's piety, and a man's bank balance. There are odd similarities to rishta meetings and purchasing animals for sacrifice from a bakrah mandi. Think of a person's traits being capitalized and boasted off in rishta meetings and see the shudder-worthy similarities to a mandiwala showing off his goat's teeth to prospective buyers. The horns, weight and hooves turn into job, skin tone, passport color, ethnicity, and countless other questionable standards to decide someone's worth.

This brings me to my next question: what exactly is the purpose of a woman in our culture? Since our society refuses to believe that women have a fundamental Kantian right to exist, and women are treated as a means to an end. I repeat, what is the purpose of a woman? To breed? To be an assistant to a man while he works? To act as a surrogate mother or maid?

As a woman who believes in the fundamental rights of a human being, particularly in freedom of choice, I cannot fathom this concept and process of marriage. How is one to marry someone, bear and raise children with them, without actually knowing them or being interested in them to some extent, forget being in love.

Is this the course that women (or even some men) go through in Pakistan? They reach a certain age or stage in life, and suddenly they're supposed to be married off like a goat ripe for sacrifice?

Shouldn't marriage be considered when you have found a person you want to be married to, someone you want with you through all the milestones, all the cities you visit, all your plans and dreams.

Lastly, I feel it imperative to point out that the definition of "settled down" for women in our culture is being married. It is not having a job where she can finance herself or afford to live by herself. It is not being independent to the point of having a career better than Shugafat aunty's engineer son. No. Marrying Shugafat aunty's darling son with his engineering degree is settling down and something applause-worthy. Only after this can society and family take a collective breath of 'shukar' and happiness.

OBITUARY: AMBASSADOR AZMAT HASSAN (EDITORIAL)

by Heer Cheema

Ambassador Azmat Hassan, who passed away at the age of 75 on the 13th of January 2020, was an inspirational figure in, and an esteemed part of, not only the LUMS community, where he had taught successfully for the last five years, but also the broader international community in his role as a former Ambassador of Pakistan.

Prior to entering the world of academia, Ambassador Azmat was a career diplomat for over three decades and was appointed Ambassador of Pakistan to Malaysia, Syria and Morocco. His other appointments included being named Deputy Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations in New York (1979-80) and being named Additional Secretary to the Prime Minister of Pakistan for Foreign Affairs and Defense (1992-94). He expertly and thoughtfully navigated the world of international politics, remarking on the "complex" and "evolving" nature of diplomacy in the 20th Century.

During this time, he was a vocal proponent of interfaith cooperation on

the global stage. In an interview during the 2013 Global Peace Convention in Malaysia, he stated: "To divide faith from practical aspects of life, from international relations is an artificial division..." He believed it was more productive to accept and confront the reality of diverse faiths and their impact on international relations. His commitment to, and passion for, issues in the international arena is also palpable through his writings; he would regularly write for the Huffington Post.

Drawing on this extensive experience in international relations, for the last two decades of his life, Ambassador Azmat was a beloved professor; first at Seton Hall University, New Jersey, where he was a senior faculty associate at the School of Diplomacy and International Relations and taught for eight years, and then later at LUMS where he joined the Political Science faculty.

His students, both current and old, remember him warmly. Safia Mahmood, a LUMS alumnus, upon hearing of Ambassador Azmat's death, posted

online: "I used to spend hours in his office. He made me type his emails and shared his views on the world." She fondly recalled how he would always be telling "anecdotes" from "his time in Morocco" and stated that Ambassador Azmat was her "first mentor".

Ambassador Azmat is also greatly missed by his colleagues. Dr. Taimur Rahman, a Professor of Political Science at LUMS, stated: "It was a shock when he passed away. There was no real indication he was unwell". Dr. Rahman went on to recount: "I was a young faculty member when I joined, but I never felt any distance from him. He was down to earth and humble and spoke to me and others as equals."

From the global stage to the classroom, Ambassador Azmat's impact and teachings will not be forgotten. Ms. Mahmood's description of Ambassador Azmat as a "valiant young spirit in a seemingly old body" truly captures the energy and positivity that Ambassador Azmat cultivated around him and in his students.

DIGITIZING THE LIBRARY: NEED OF THE HOUR? (OPINION)

by Basit Khan and Wasay Ali

Are physical books really a thing of the past? In an era dominated by technology, e-books are all the rage, especially in academic institutions. Fears of obsolescence exist, yet libraries continue to be an integral part of university campuses. Instead, the inevitable has surfaced, in the way of collaboration, as a growing number of reputable universities all across the globe move towards digitization of libraries. At LUMS, the Gad & Birgit Raising Library continues to thrive as printed books remain at the core of its services. A digitization project has been spotted at the horizon. However, budget constraints, infrastructural limitations, and user preferences on campus appear to be some major hurdles.

The merits of digitizing the library make the case for its need. The first and most prominent is eliminating the flaws inherent to physical books. The costs of maintaining these books, especially rare collections, can be greatly reduced by converting them to digital copies. In addition, the risk of damaging these fairly valuable physical copies can also be done away with. This process can be further extended to incorporate an environment conservation effort for future additions to the library.

Moreover, digitization can make the library's collection extremely easy to access for the student body at large. Currently, the library's online portal allows an effectively infinite period of issuance through reissues, however, extending this period is disallowed in case the issued material is also requested by another user. This can be a genuine issue for students, especially those working on lengthy research projects, but it can be

circumvented if a digital copy is available for use at all times. Furthermore, access to the library's collection can be provided to other universities in the region in an effort to promote academic advancement among other institutions as well.

In regard to certain pressing demands put forward by the community, digitizing the library creates the possibility for paving the way for a lot more empty space to accommodate a larger amount of students. Libraries all around the world face a trade off between study space for students and space to store books. Digitization, would effectively mean a centre ground can be found and study space can be significantly increased to cater to the increased demand along with providing users the essential academic resources they are in need of online -- while physical copies can be kept "on call" inside remote storage.

Nonetheless, in the case of LUMS, complete digitization of the library appears difficult to achieve. An excessively large initial cost needs to be incurred for the project to be implemented. In comparison, the amount of financial support currently required for the maintenance of physical books is minimal. Introducing and supporting the program could mean a significant outlay in an already burdened budget.

Additionally, extensive research on campus still points to the fact that the students largely tend to prefer printed books.

Kash Kumar '22 says, "Hard copies are a lot more convenient both to carry and read." Referring to the prescription

eyeglasses he wears, Kumar '22 says, "Reading off of a screen for a long time can also be difficult."

The reason why many startups like Oyebook that deal in print versions of our course packs are thriving is primarily due to the students preferring hard copies of books for academic purposes. Moreover, the number of books checked out of the library every year is increasing exponentially according to Nadeem Siddique, senior manager of the library.

Reservations regarding whether or not the perpetually underperforming IST department will be able to deal with the additional load a digitized library presents persist. In times when IST finds it hard to resolve petty issues like an underperforming wireless network, throwing another bulk of responsibility onto them presents a serious risk.

Despite the compulsion to adapt to the times and the positive changes that digitization of the library can bring on campus, it is important for the administration and the community as a whole to understand the unique institutional limitations that LUMS faces. Further, the matter of preferences on campus also plays a large role in shaping the need for such a project and needs to be taken into account along with the stability of the supporting IT infrastructure. However, the process of library digitization is a fairly uncommon phenomenon in Pakistan and LUMS could attempt to find an opportunity to pioneer this development in academia.

Little things
Scribbling on paper, uttering blabber
Didn't realize where goals changed
Where life changed, where age changed
From happiness to success, took the leap
Harder and harder, faster and faster
Work until you get there
Work until you have it all
Work until you get the success
But wait? Did you get the success.
Wasn't success, after all your own happiness.
Wasn't success after all the afternoon talks you had
with friends
Wasn't it after all in the smiles that you shared
And wasn't it after all in the love you fell in.

Happiness admitted once that it likes to stay low key
And it once said that if you look for me at a party,
you'll find me in the corner of the room.
It likes to party with little things
And isn't success after all
Mirrored in the little things?

- Malice

UP CLOSE WITH HELP @LUMS AND SAMAN IQBAL

by Manahel Khan

LUMS has a number of Facebook groups catering to various needs of the LUMS community. Groups like LDF (LUMS Discussion Forum), Girl Power at LUMS, and the individual society groups to name some. However, a particularly interesting Facebook group is Help @LUMS. Created on the 10th of September 2018, it hosts more than 3000 members. Help @LUMS is a group solely aiming to provide the LUMS community a safe platform to get mental health support. What more is that it was created by a then sophomore and hence, a relatively young student, Saman Iqbal, who still continues to administer the page.

Q. A brief introduction about yourself.

I'm currently a junior year law student. You'll mostly find me at the Super Store, hunting for Cocomo, or between fiction shelves in the library.

Q. How did you come up with this idea of Help at LUMS?

I struggled a lot during my first year at LUMS, and most people generally do, too. I wanted to create a family that could rely on each other and open up to each other without the fear of judgement.

Q. Do you run it alone?
 Yes.

Q. Did you face any problems in creating it or have there been any obstacles ever since?
 No, there haven't been any obstacles

as such but I find it sad when people aren't kind to each other. Mental health remains a taboo in our society, which makes it harder to open up about these struggles. I wouldn't want anyone opening up on the group to regret it later or feel bullied in any way because then they entirely shy away from the idea of opening up or seeking help. So, if you see your friends opening up about something personal, please refrain from joking or making mean comments about it. We are supposed to uplift our friends, not bring them down.

Q. Being the admin of this page, have you ever found it difficult to carry on with it or has it ever come in the way of your own mental wellbeing?

No, I look forward to it every day. Seeing people help each other, showing kindness to complete strangers on a Facebook group,



reading their wholesome comments warms my heart.

Q. How do you plan on leaving this

legacy behind once you graduate or will you continue to look after it?
 Umm, I kinda sorta have no idea. Please give suggestions?

Q. What is your message for all the people who are on the forum or have benefited from the forum?

Please be kind. Don't be hard on others, and especially yourself. Open up, break the silence, seek help. I promise, you'll feel a lot better. You'll be alright. Every little thing will be fine, and even if it is not, we'll make it alright bit by bit.

Q. Why do you think this platform was necessary when groups like LDF already existed?

Help @LUMS was made for people like me, people who felt alone and hesitated in speaking up about their struggles. LDF is more about academic queries, Help @LUMS is a family.

With the recent outbreak of COVID-19 globally, Iqbal confirmed that it has affected the group community as well where an increasing number of quarantined group members are seeking mental health and comfort. But she was glad to reveal that the community is "trying its best to not let the current situation get to it".

Groups like Help@LUMS are a relief to the campus community and let's pray that they continue to benefit the student body for long.

FROM BUNKING TO THE BUNKER

by Manahel Ayyaz Khan



Lately, LUMS has experienced the opening of quite a few new eateries on campus. These new joints have provided a wider and better variety of food available to the campus community. But perhaps the most popular amongst the students so far is the little café under the stairs of the Library building, The Bunker.

What is different about this little but extremely cosy café is not only its warm ambience or the aroma of freshly baked cookies wafting as soon as one enters the place, but the fact that it is owned and managed by LUMS's own graduates, Safir Hasan and Ahsan Sajjad.

The first thing one notices when one approaches the café is the European looking green window and door like the ones you could find on a Parisian street café. Entering inside, one is hit with the warmth of the wooden aesthetic and the scent of cookies and coffee.

"This was a deliberate attempt to make the place look homely," says Hasan, sitting on a shelf comfortably, "I want the students to come in here and forget about their GPA. There's no vibe of LUMS. And very soon we'll put up a music system too." When asked about the inspiration for the name, Hasan confessed that he used to bunk his classes to set up his own coffee business, so it was only natural for the place to be called "The Bunker". Furthermore,

Hasan's partner, Ahsan, left his job at Procter & Gamble (P&G) to start this enterprise from scratch. On being asked about the partnership, Hasan said that they have a "divide and conquer" policy as he looks after the "flashier" sides of the café like the aesthetics, customer dealing, and marketing whilst Sajjad does the management and handles the finances. The recipes are divided between them both.

But the road to The Bunker was not an easy one. "It took us two years and tonnes of contacts to set 'The Bunker up', says Hasan. According to him, the LUMS admin is sceptical of letting students set up start-ups on campus because often, they are incapable of looking after them, that leads to a decline in the quality of the enterprise, "We had to prove to them that The Bunker was in good hands and that it will not be neglected". So far, the owners are living up to their words, according to the campus community.

Moreover, Hasan and Sajjad had a message for the student body. They believe that becoming an entrepreneur does not require any specific degree or school. Belonging to SDSB, they confessed that HSS or SAHSOL students may be better trained for pursuing their own business ventures because they are taught to think "critically". When asked about the future ideas regarding the Bunker, Hasan told

us that they plan on introducing more "summer oriented" food and beverages like slushies and fresh juices for the upcoming season with the help of another of the students. Hence, more future partnerships amongst the student body can be expected. Additionally, they plan on expanding the joint outside of LUMS and have already received offers from the University of Central Punjab, University College of Lahore, and University of Lahore.

What more is that both Hasan and Sajjad have plans to ensure that their employees remain comfortable yet vigilant with the job of managing the Bunker while the owners are not around. While they remain strict with the money matters and customer dealing, both alumni intend on rotating the employees in retail stores and shipping them out as managers in the other branches to provide them incentives to grow professionally.

The interview ended with high hopes of the Bunker's success and inspiration on the reporter's part after watching Hasan and Sajjad's zeal and zest. Furthermore, they offered free cookies as a token of thanks for interviewing them. Let us hope that the two and their team will strive to make the Bunker a signature of LUMS and their example would motivate both, the students and the admin to run more entrepreneurship opportunities on campus.

COMICS



LUMS students be like.... RAVE TIME !!!



THE
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