

THE LUMS POST

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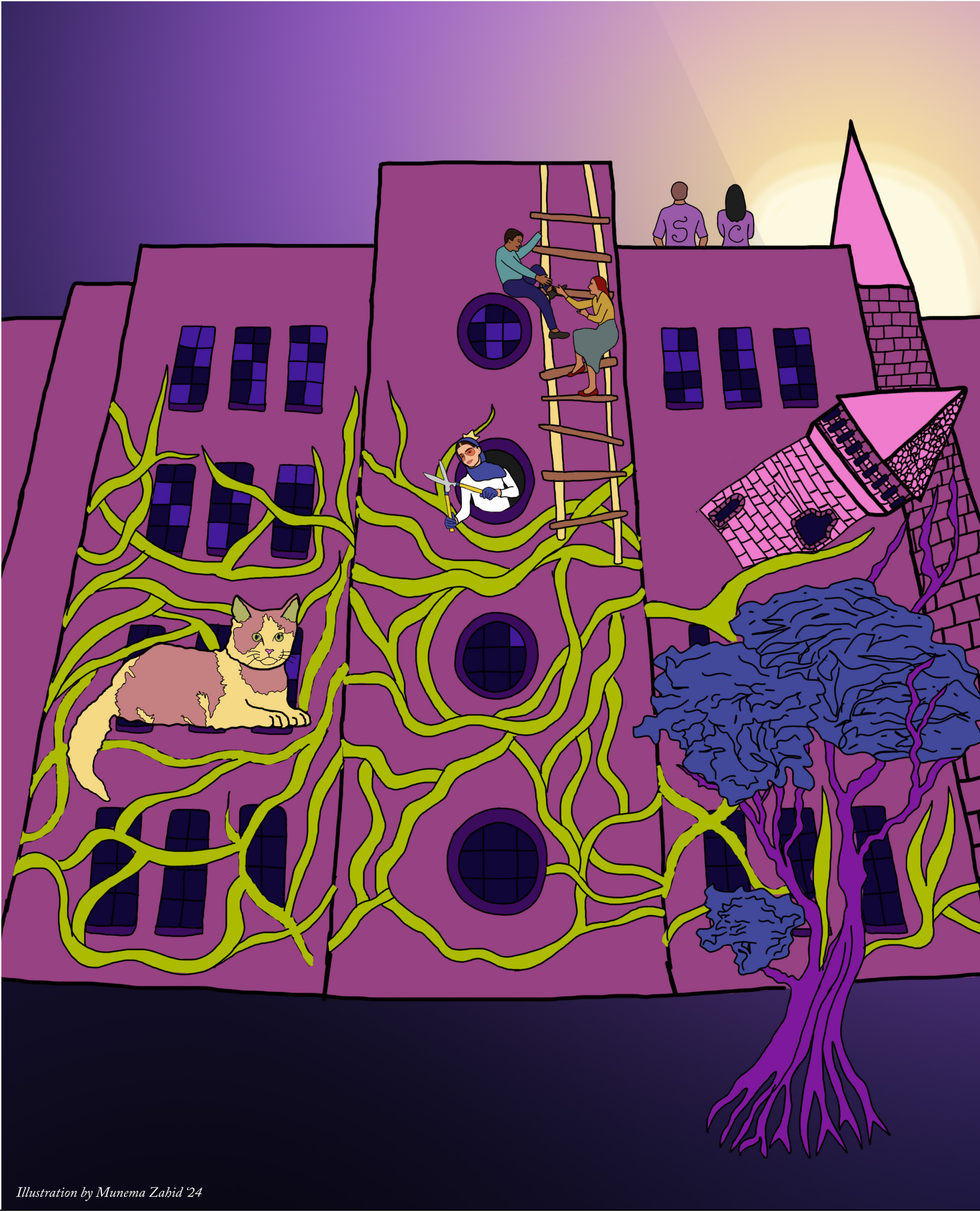


Illustration by Munema Zabid '24

CAMPUS NEWS

A Review of the Student Council 2021-22

by Zainaab Basil '24

When the new Student Council (SC) took their oaths on May 24, it became a moment of celebration and rejoicing. The student body had endured almost two years of being represented by a council that was being carried on the shoulders of a select few remaining members while the rest had either graduated or had lost any incentive to work for it. However, this year we elected our first female president in over 15 years. Thus, the election was historic in its own right and the expectations attached to them were at par with the elation. They also started off with an established ethos: the council's president, Anoosh Fatima '22, had already become the face of the campus reopening campaign and a Senior representative of the SC, Afaf Ehsan '22 had been a part of the leading support system during the #MeToo Movement.

Even though the academic year has recently begun, given the proactivity of this group, and the rapidly changing situation of a number of issues, a delineation of the SC's work is important, if not vital.

One of the most important tasks was the reopening of the campus. Despite the current situation,

it is fair to say that the SC did manage to fulfil its promise. This can be seen through the fresh approach the LUMS administration seems to have taken since the SC's efforts began. Previously, those who many students thought of as their 'adversaries' were the administrators who would not allow access despite government orders. Currently, we have an administration that has not only been convinced to open campus, but to also grant unconditional residence to non-Lahoris and even have over 53% of classes in-person, according to the latest memo.

One must take a moment to also applaud the SC's attention to equity here. This was the first time, in over a year, that all hostelites and day scholars had access to the campus. The onus of our situation now, however, falls solely on the NCOC. Or, more aptly put, on the national inability to follow SOPs when a lockdown eases. All hope is still not lost, though, as Sophomore Representative, Injeel Abdul Aziz '24, explained in conversation with *The Post*: "As soon as there's a change in the directive, we'll be more than ready and happy to convene with the administration to reverse the policy." With this, one can place a metaphorical tick in the box next to 'get the campus reopened.'

Nevertheless, this review would be amiss if some of the controversies that came up during this time are not discussed. The first of these was the truly tumultuous debate about the legitimacy of a number quoted in an SC email from July, which stated that 'up to 60%' of classes were on campus. Quickly, though, LDF was riddled with posts about how this number was unrepresentative: MGS HSS, in particular, had a beyond minimal share in these rarities, and some students claimed that the number '60' itself was an exaggeration. Outrage ensued.

The conclusion of this debacle was as follows: MGS HSS managed to convert enough classes on campus that consistent complaints were reduced to their usual level, and currently, 53% of classes across the board are on campus, as stated in the memo. Yet, given that this process was filled with cogs that were entirely immovable, such as guaranteeing professors the choice to determine the medium of their teaching — something Dean of HSS, Dr. Ali Khan, reiterated during a town hall in August — as well as the relatively happy ending, it may also be fair to award this as another winning tick to the SC.

This is not the case, however, for the check-in fiasco that occurred this year. Hostelites were given the option of choosing double or triple occupancy rooms. Upon their arrival, however, many double occupancy residents found a third bed and the lack of a desk in their rooms. The SC had preempted a larger number of hostelites to arrive, for whom they had made these arrangements. As the situation progressed, it became clear that there was no contingency plan.

The problem became exponentially aggravated when the NCOC shut down in-person classes, which meant that hostelites had to take online classes in their rooms that did not have a desk or chair, despite paying for them. The resulting dynamic seemed to be that the SC became a mediator between the residence office and the student body, the conclusion of which was that students were offered a Rs. 20,000 discount if their room had an extra bed. Understandably, this is a less than satisfactory solution for most. Mughees Jerall '24 pointed out that "the whole thing was very mismanaged and the residence faculty had no clue what to do." (continued on page 2)

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FEATURES

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Menstrual Mysteries: The Unexplored Side-Effect of the COVID-19 Vaccine on Women

by Munema Zahid '24

Faryal* '22 was concerned when her periods were delayed after getting vaccinated. On the verge of panicking, she took to Facebook to ask if this had been happening to other women too. Her post on Girl Power at LUMS quickly filled up with comments. What started off as one woman's hunch quickly turned into an underreported potential side-effect of the COVID-19 vaccine.

"I was feeling so weak after just the first day, and it was hard to get up from the blood loss," says Sarah* '24, who faced a heavier flow during her period. It also lasted longer than usual, and was more painful. These symptoms, as well as many others, have been reported by multiple women after they got vaccinated. According to a survey conducted by *The Post* which received 51 responses, 31 women dealt with periods that were irregular in their timing or duration. A further 18 women claimed to have had more painful periods.

Sarah* had been made aware of these side-effects by a friend before she received the vaccine. However, Azka* '24 was not, and she mentions she would've done more research about the vaccine had she known about these symptoms, "It takes me back to all those claims that vaccines are harmful for women, especially in terms of reproduction. Didn't the people who made these vaccines test them properly beforehand?"

Misinformation surrounding the vaccine's effect on women seems notable, with 27.5% of survey respondents reporting they believe the vaccine does, or might, affect their fertility. Although the original vaccine trials were conducted with equal numbers of men and women, the data did not take sex into account when evaluating side-effects. A paper published in a global health journal examined 121 papers on COVID-19, and found that only 14 analysed whether sex affected the results. Women's health concerns being disregarded has been a long-running medical tradition. A 2017 study found that women are less likely to receive CPR than men, and older research shows that although women report severe, more frequent pain, they are more likely to receive sedatives rather than pain medication. "I feel like little to no attention is being given, especially when it comes to the effect of vaccines on the menstrual cycle. Women are deemed as overly sensitive, dramatic and emotional," says Rania Rashid '24.

Dr. Kathryn Clancy, who initiated the first formal study on the link between vaccines and menstruation, points out that for a long time, vaccines were tested only in men. In 1977, the FDA banned young women from participating in clinical studies. Although this law was eventually reversed,

researchers did not follow suit. Female hormones complicated results, so women were left out. The result today is heightened anxiety and mistrust, and a threat to establishing herd immunity. "I was anxious, because this has never happened before," adds Rania, after she began facing menstrual irregularities.

As Pakistan navigates the delta wave, the apprehension of women who need to get vaccinated increases after sudden, unexpected changes to their menstrual cycle. Misinformation and conspiracy theories gain momentum, even though the negative effects of the vaccine on female fertility have been disproven by numerous studies. Sarah* additionally says that her menstrual symptoms were similar to what she faced after contracting COVID-19 back in April.

However, it is important to note that these irregularities may not be directly linked to the vaccine. Since menstruation can be influenced by multiple factors such as stress, there may be an indirect link to the vaccine, or even no link at all. Still, the lack of research means no one can say for sure. Even now that the topic has been raised, it is too late for researchers to track any changes in women's menstrual cycles before and after getting vaccinated, although Dr. Clancy says this could have been done during the vaccine trials.

Although Faryal* had browsed medical articles regarding menstrual irregularities after the vaccine, these weren't effective in calming her fears. She still didn't know of anyone around her facing these symptoms. "Social media was effective in helping me gain perspective that many people had been through this, and this wasn't something to be stressed out about," she says.

These accounts point towards a glaring lack of acknowledgement of this issue in vaccine-related discussions. A potential side-effect of the vaccine—as valid as a cold, fever or sore arm—was not disclosed by medical experts or official studies. This confirmation has yet to arrive.

Since women did not find out about the symptoms from trusted sources, the only option left was social media: prone to misinformation, but the only place where these women could seek support. Although most are now aware of these side-effects, the delay in this awareness and the way they had to find out are both appalling. As for the consequences this had, from vaccine hesitancy to general panic, they are unjustifiable.

**Names have been changed to preserve anonymity.*

OPINION/EDITORIAL

I Tried Energy Healing (Reiki) for Stress

by Khadija Faruqi '24

I'm lying on a table in a dimly lit room. A woman I have just met has her hands clasped around my head. Save for the soft whirring of the fan above, the room is silent. I wait with bated breath, after all, if this worked, my life would never be the same.

The woman is Mrs. Riffat Irfan, and she has been a reiki practitioner for the last 22 years. Reiki is a Japanese energy healing technique which seeks to promote a healthy flow of energy in the body. Enthusiasts believe that whenever the body experiences trauma – mental or physical – the energy in the body stagnates. That's where reiki comes in: the practitioner acts as a channel for 'universal energy' or ki and transmits it to the recipient's body with their hands, thus allowing the energy in the body to flow freely again.

While studies proving its effectiveness are limited, frequent reiki patients swear by the treatment's potency. It is claimed that reiki can provide relief for conditions such as stress, anxiety, insomnia, depression, and headaches.

Still, going into the treatment, I had serious doubts about whether reiki really worked. When I expressed these concerns, Mrs. Irfan said, "I use

reiki to help people manage their stress and physical illnesses too. It promotes your body's ability to naturally heal itself; it relaxes your mind and soul." She encouraged me to just lay back, and let the process speak for itself.

My objective for trying reiki was simple: semester was starting, and I was more agitated than ever. I found Mrs. Irfan on Instagram – @ireiki_healing – after which, I called her and communicated my concerns. While she offered online sessions for reiki where reiki is 'sent' over a distance, she told me she would prefer meeting me in person for our first time together. I agreed and made the almost 30-minute journey from LUMS to her Township residence (I think my stress tripled just at the thought of going so far!).

When I entered, Mrs. Irfan, whose presence radiated kindness, took me behind a large screen to begin our session. She inquired about my issues in more detail, and I told her that I struggled with anxiety to the point where it was negatively impacting my quality of life. She then instructed me to lay facing upwards on a table covered in soft bedding, so that we could begin the process.

(continued on page 4)

Investigating the Summer Delays Faced in Ordering Sports Kits from SLUMS

by Salman Tuasene Kharwaja '24

In Summer 2020, Sports at LUMS (SLUMS) came under scrutiny for the delays faced in delivering their kits. Amongst concerns and speculations surfacing on LUMS Discussion Forum, some students commented on the value for money compared to the quality of the kits and others expressed worries over being "looted" in Shifa*'22 words.

The Post reached out to SLUMS to discuss the issue in finer detail and understand the chain of events that led to these student concerns. According to Rojah Sheikh '22, Head of the SLUMS kit team for Spring 2021, the SLUMS team used to handle everything from designing the kits to dealing with the vendors.

Previously, SLUMS announced the design of the kits in August. This led to orders being taken towards the end of Fall semester, which were then delivered mid-Spring, a marketing tactic to generate interest for the Spring kit cycle. The second batch of orders was then given at the end of Spring and delivered by the end of June.

Sheikh recounted that the issue began when the pandemic hit in March 2020—for the kit cycle of Spring 2020. Due to the lockdown imposed, production was halted till the end of June 2020. However, the issue only started from there.

Sheikh explained that according to the feedback received, the previous kits were unsatisfactory, so SLUMS had changed vendors for the Spring 2020 cycle. Sheikh mentioned that since this was a new vendor, they had to pay half the price in advance.

Sheikh then discussed that when production was expected to restart in July 2020, the vendor pointed out how the previously agreed-upon prices were unsatisfactory. Since the vendor had been paid in advance, the SLUMS team couldn't find a new vendor and had to convince the vendor to stick to the original prices. Due to this and other delays, it took about six months for the Spring 2020 kits to be delivered (in December).

The new team for Spring 2021 was led by Sheikh. They first chose to find a new vendor and then implemented an online payment system, working with LUMS IST to make the portal. The orders for the Spring 2021 cycle were opened on the 20th of April and for ten days only. By mid-May, the data was processed for 250 orders and sent to the LUMS Procurement Department: which included double-checking the address provided and obtaining the payment for the kits.

Sheikh elaborated that the kits were expected to be delivered by mid-June. Due to delays faced in finding a suitable vendor, getting payments from customers and the arrival of the Eid holidays, this date was pushed ahead. Therefore, SLUMS sent an email to inform the customers of the delays. This was confirmed by Ali* '24 who said, "SLUMS team emailed us that they're facing a holdup due to Eid lockdown and some delayed payments, but they did not convey when to expect our kits after the delay."

On July 5, 2021, the orders were received by SLUMS. Sheikh explained how the team then verified the orders to check their quality and cross-checked the orders received with the customers' sizes. All the kits were then placed into envelopes and sent to the TCS office--the orders being sent on the eve of July 7, 2021.

On July 27, 2021, SLUMS sent out a feedback form to weigh how people are feeling about the quality of the kits and if they had any other concerns. According to Sheikh, "Every individual who complained was reached out, the issue was understood and then resolved."

Some of the reviews contained sarcastic and at one instance, tone-deaf criticism levelled against SLUMS for improper quality and service. One of the accusations made was by Muhammad Talha Younus '21 who sarcastically made a post on LDF, "Unpopular opinion: I think SLUMS has savings account(s) where they park our money for a year or so. Free income on interest?"

Concerning the statements made about the SLUMS kits, Simran* '21, a member of the SLUMS kit team in 2019, said, "I helped with the designs and I was in charge of collecting money from every individual. I don't know about the delays, I was only vocal about people accusing SLUMS of misusing the money (considering I collected the money and watched it get handed to the vendor)."

The Post also reached out to some customers to discuss their experiences with ordering the kits from SLUMS. Younus '21 said, "So the main problem was late delivery. I saw some posts and comments on LDF in which people complained about waiting for over a year for SLUMS kits and eventually getting third rate material. But I must say that I got my kit a couple of weeks ago and it was really good."

Ali* '24 said, "It was delayed by a month. Otherwise I did not face any issues."

Regarding how SLUMS could improve the experience, Shayan* '21 said, "I believe the best possible solution is to bridge the communication gap with the customers. If we receive regular updates about our orders then I don't think a minor delay would bother us knowing our orders are being prepared."

Another student, Ali Raza Mir '16, said, "The stuff was good and the price was pretty reasonable. I look forward to ordering two packs next year. One for me and one for my spouse."

At the end of the interview, Sheikh mentioned that at the end of June 2021, an individual sent an email to the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) with an official complaint against SLUMS. This individual alleged that SLUMS 'entire kit is a whole fraud' and that SLUMS had not delivered the kit 'despite the passing of 3 months.' While the complaint failed to reach conclusion, Sheikh '22 pointed out that due to its official nature, SWR and OSA were concerned about these delays and they had a discussion with SLUMS to ensure these do not come in the future.

While the fiasco with the kits has been taken care of to a large extent, along with the changed attitude being adopted by SWR and OSA, the LUMS community can be hopeful that such incidents do not happen in the future. At the same time, it is to be acknowledged that the pandemic brought about unexpected constraints and change of events for many entities and individuals worldwide who are all still learning to find their way out or around them.

**Names have been changed to preserve anonymity.*

Student Council Review (cont.)

by Zainaab Basil '24

(Continued from page 1) These desks have still not been put into any storage, and various types of furniture are still populating hostel hallways. On the condition of anonymity, a source explained that people have resorted to moving the furniture they need themselves, with no one keeping track of where these desks and beds are ending up. This gives rise to several concerns: will the students be held accountable for the damage or disappearance of furniture that they are not even aware they're registering for? How will the price for certain rooms be determined if their furniture keeps changing? Despite the SC's best efforts, this incident cannot be categorised as a success.

Lastly, there have been significant advancements outside of the COVID-19 induced crises as well. A truly commendable endeavour is the launch of a campus harassment helpline, which is available 24/7, as well as the regular sessions the SC has held in light of certain events, such as organising Town Halls and even having a Rant/Crying session as the semester blues kicked in. These proj-

ects are vital, and credit must be given to the team that has hosted them. Haiqa Wahid '25 explained how the session held after a series of femicide cases helped her "recenter" herself and became "a reminder that there is a community ready to offer its support."

One must also acknowledge the SC's commitment to honouring its promise of transparency and proactivity. This can be seen in the fresh social media presence the SC has curated, which allows students to remain active spectators to their work. The team's regular emails with update documents are also reassuring as they showcase the progression of important issues.

We do, of course, have a long way to go with this group of representatives, and despite the aforementioned controversies, the culture they exhibit with consistent communication, accessibility through weekly office hours and monthly progress reports is promising.

THE LUMS POST

ARTS & CULTURE

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Pets at LUMS

by Musa Ali Chaudhry '24

The past three semesters have been either partially or entirely online, and as a result, the lonely experience of taking classes on one's laptop in a quiet room has effectively become normalized. For myself, and — as you'll soon see — many other fellow Luminites, pets played an extremely helpful role during this time by making us feel a bit less overwhelmed through their support, company, and even comic relief.

Last semester, my schedule was designed in a way that I had a nearly six-hour block of consecutive classes twice a week. I remember how, in the midst of a dry lecture or stressful class quiz, Marcus Aurelius — my adorable fifteen-month-old cat — would climb onto my lap and fall asleep there. Although a seemingly small gesture, it would immediately brighten up my mood.

After posting on the LUMS Discussion Forum and engaging with the ever-present and loving pet-owners community at LUMS, I was able to gather a collection of similar memorable pet stories.

Wajiha Humayun '23 has a beautiful family of four dogs, including an adorable puppy named Tinku. "Whenever I would unmute my microphone for class participation (CP), one of my dogs would come to the window immediately ... seeing them show up every 5 minutes during online classes was what made them a little more bearable," she said. Below Tinku with his mother, Ignis.



Wasiq Anwaar '21 graduated during an online semester. He talked about how his gorgeous award-winning rottweilers, Wazeer and Sultan, played an indispensable role during his final year at LUMS. In fact, he firmly believes that his dogs were crucial in helping him graduate on time "given the circumstances." Below you can see Wasiq crouching down next to his best friend, Wazeer, on his graduation day.



The death of a beloved pet is an extremely sad reality, but the pleasant memories they leave behind stay with one for a long, long time. One of Noor Us Sahar's '23 favorite memories of her cat, Sheru, was his tendency to try and steal her food during online classes. He may not always have been successful at doing so, but the fact that he would still try every time was "the highlight of [Noor's] day."



Interestingly, it appears that students are not the only ones that relied on their pets as a support system during the online semesters—many of our instructors are pet lovers too! Haadia Mumtaz '23 narrated a story about an instructor who was particularly proud of his kitten. "He sent a mass email [asking] about vets and the kind of treats he should get. He was such a proud cat dad, telling us that the kitten stayed in his study and always slept near him. He even brought her to class and showed us the little fluff ball," she said.

Similarly, Ali Roman '23 shared a video of Professor Hasham Nasir, his Gender Studies instructor who would pick up his cat, Billi Billi, mid-lecture and continue teaching as he played with her. "It was the cutest thing ever, and would cheer everyone up," Ali claims. "He even had a dog, Lady Toffee Janjua, who was very popular amongst class discussions too!"

While such cute moments with our furry friends are heart-warming, every cat or dog parent knows that sometimes it's their dumb antics that make the most precious memories. I know that Marcus Aurelius often enrages me when, for instance, he jumps on my desk from a high shelf and scares the daylights out of me, but looking back, these shenanigans just make me appreciate his company even more. Haider Khan '22 faces a similar situation during online classes too; he shared a video of his cat charging up and pouncing on him from across the room as he sat down to study.

Then again, our pets mean well. It is not their fault that they live in a modern world filled with humans and human inventions, right? They do a lot for us, and as you can see, being a pet parent really helped many LUMS students and alumni. I think Rukhshan Haroon '22's cat, Mao, would agree with me. He's a great cat, and all he asks for is a nice, warm place to lie down on during cold winter nights — Rukhshan's laptop just happened to be the right spot.



"It's just like the Khokha!": Of LUMS and Twitter

by Zoha Fareed Chishti '23

I will be honest, when I first made my twitter account back in 2017, it was born out of the need to voice my opinions to the void. With a follower count of just under 30, it more or less worked the way I had anticipated. What else could Twitter be good for, anyway? The answer to my, admittedly, rhetorical question would come much later. That is, once the pandemic had hit, and like everything else, the LUMS community also found itself moving online. Initially coming to the social media site with purposes of their own, students found themselves entangled in something larger—a distinct virtual community almost imitating the spatial essence of the campus and relying on itself for entertainment, comfort, and most importantly, solidarity.

"I made my twitter account during class, can you believe that?" Noor Khalid '23 tells *The Post*. Having just started university, back in November 2019, Khalid shared the curiosities of an average freshman. Everyone around her was talking about how professors and students from the humanities and social sciences school were taking twitter by storm. "People used to tell me keh yeh loag communism pehla rahay hain, on twitter, and I wanted to know. I was so curious," Khalid laughs. It was only after she had started regularly using twitter that Khalid began to appreciate the space. Slowly, she began to notice how liberating and supportive the LUMS twitter community is: "I found so many new friends—I have never met them in real life, but I know they are my friends. And from SDSB too!" For Khalid, it also became a source of comfort, "Eid has always been an isolating experience for me, but this year it felt like I was celebrating it with so many friends, all of whom I have not met, but know from LUMS twitter!"

According to her, it is not all fun and games though, the space also holds the power to influence, "the fee hike, the campus reopening, even the LUMSU name debacle, twitter helped voice our thoughts to the administration." Khalid explains that the solidarity that she has experienced within the virtual community made her believe in the power of her individual voice online.

Ahmad Aziz '24 had joined the site in March 2019, during his A Levels. Once the pandemic hit, he noticed how much his twitter usage had increased. "Twitter has helped a lot in beating the lockdown blues," Aziz elaborated on the impact the virtual space had on his experience as a student during the pandemic: "It really helps knowing you aren't the only one going through it." Incidentally, starting university during the pandemic, Twitter initiated Aziz into the LUMS community without ever having actually been on campus. "From deciding on what courses to enroll in, which on-campus activities to look forward to, the best places to cry on campus, what fonts [professors] prefer... all this stuff I've learnt from the LUMS twitter community." Twitter, he explained, made him feel included—he brings up Waris Arsalan, and how his passing was grieved by the community, "I did not know [him], but I knew he was dear to [us]."

Aziz was not the only one whose twitter usage increased after March of 2020. Muzna Amina '24

told *The Post* that she had made her account back in 2014 but only occasionally used it, mostly just to voice her concerns about Palestine. It was only after the university went online that Amina found herself regularly returning to her account. "It is an interesting [experience]," she laughed when asked about how she feels about being on twitter now. "You know, people make jokes about how twitter feels like khokha, with so many LUMS people around..." The space is special, Amina muses, because of the interactions one comes across. She recalls seeing a tweet, which asked people to come to the cricket ground if they wanted cake. "A girl was celebrating her birthday, so many people joined her. There were pictures [under that thread]," she tells *The Post*.

Amina appreciates how twitter has become a space for open and casual interaction, something even purely LUMS-centric forums, like the LDF, have not been able to offer. Online university has been an isolating and a demoralizing experience for many, and one often doesn't know who they are studying with. According to Amina, twitter helps with that. "It's about the relatability... someone will be tweeting during enrollment, or something like that, and you see other people going through the same things as you are."

It is not all sunshine and rainbows though. There are times when it becomes scary to navigate twitter. When asked about the various discourses that the LUMS community gets embroiled within, Amina replies that, "there is a lot of toxicity, I end up muting words to keep my timeline clear." This is mirrored by Imaad Hasan Jafri '21, who despite having been on twitter since 2014, finds it difficult to keep up with the negativity that comes along. "It bombards you," Jafri explains. Just a few weeks earlier, for example, LUMS twitter was engaged in a heated debate—whether travelling in a rickshaw negated the privilege that came with studying in a prestigious institution. Suffice to say, the matter of discussion lost its way somewhere between the personal attacks made by either side.

Yet, the negativity fails to drive away the students from logging back on regularly. Jafri maintains that the community he has found on twitter is rewarding in itself, and the experience is liberating, especially considering the anonymity the space allows. "It is acceptable to be more honest and expressive about your life, interests, and preferences," he says.

Khalid echoes this sentiment, "you can say anything, and they will just scroll without judging." The anonymity that Twitter allows is especially liberating for women, because it gives them the space to nurture their voice, without being subjected to online trolling, or worse, bodily threats. This is unique to twitter—perhaps explaining the popularity of the social media site within the student body.

As Khalid sums the general sentiments, she cannot imagine quitting twitter because of the community she has found, "It's my daily morning paper, it connects me to everyone, I would be suffocated otherwise."

Letters to the Editor

Send your letters to the email addresses below. Letters may be edited for purposes of clarity and space and should carry the writer's roll number and city.
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The Post Reader

The Post has its own internal ombudsman — *The Post Reader*. The idea is to attend to our readers' complaints, take note of any violations of our Code of Ethics, and respond to them professionally.
Email: thelumpost@gmail.com

OPINION/EDITORIAL

"There's Chicken in my Daal!": The Struggle of Being Vegetarian and Pescatarian On-Campus

by Mahrubh Murad '24

Dev Kumar '23, a rising junior at the Suleman Dawood School of Business, and a practicing Hindu, is a lacto-vegetarian* with a knack for staying cautiously optimistic. He shares, "When I moved to LUMS, I realised the cons of being vegetarian in Pakistan", as he quickly experienced his usual variety of vegetarian food options abundantly available in his hometown, Karachi, being swapped for daal and sabzi at PDC. According to Dev, "My main ethos of being a vegetarian is to be non-violent towards nature and mother earth. [In my religion] there is a concept of not fighting anyone for your own sake. Interestingly, the first misconception that I heard from my friends [about being vegetarian] is that 'it's in your religion' and 'you are bound to eat vegetarian food'. However, this is a myth. There is no restriction on eating meat in Hinduism. Although, in all the five [sacred] books, it isn't forbidden to eat meat, it is just recommended to have a diet that does not hurt anybody". Dev explains that a gunn is a positive or negative characteristic of an individual. He says, "The three main characteristics are: Satvik (mode of goodness and purity), Rajsik (mode of passion, ignorance, ego, and anger) and Tapsik (mode of laziness). By following a non-violent conduct towards nature

you follow the Satvik path of goodness and morality". On campus, Dev found it increasingly difficult to stick to his vegetarian diet. He says, "The first semester was very difficult. The [general] student body had five to six eateries available to them including Jammin, Juice Zone, Zakir Tikka etc. I only had one option: PDC. They offered daal, rice, and vegetables. However, the options at PDC were very limited. Eating daal every day is torture!". "I struggled with breakfast since I'm not a tea lover nor do I eat eggs so I rarely had breakfast. I had a very bad experience as I had classes in the morning but I could not have breakfast. The only option I had was to grab a cup of milk and plain cake. With a laugh he shares, "On Thursday, aloo parathas were served in PDC. It was my favourite day!" However, not having a good breakfast wasn't the only trouble he had. He mentions, "If I got late for dinner at PDC, they mixed daal with another chicken or beef dish, and I was served daal mixed with chicken. This was very upsetting but I had become used to it." Speaking further about his experience, he says, "I was served chicken in my daal multiple times. When I posted [on LDF] I got a really good response. I got a lot of support from the Student

Council. They talked to PDC's manager regarding this. I knew PDC's manager and he used to take extra care of me. He usually asked me if I'd had any problem [with the food]. But I didn't feel comfortable telling him, so I stayed quiet". Yet, intermixing of vegetarian food with non-vegetarian dishes is not a campus-specific problem. Rather, in Dev's experience while ordering from FoodPanda he faced a similar problem. He shares, "There were many instances where I ordered a pure-vegetarian dish but when I received it, there were problems. Day in and day out I had problems, therefore, I started to cook for myself but it's very difficult to cook in the hostel as it's very time consuming. I had to drop this idea". Moreover for Dev, "[It was] very difficult to survive Ramadan in the previous semesters. Even though I was not fasting I had to go for sehri since there wasn't any breakfast available at PDC. The snack menu available only had non-vegetarian options. I complained about this and they introduced one vegetarian option after fifteen days. Those fifteen days were very difficult for me. I used to go to the superstore and get noodles, biscuits and other snacks to survive the day". He further comments, "Most of the people I have met at LUMS have been very supportive but some

people have joked about my vegetarian lifestyle. With the latter, I tried to engage them in a constructive argument since I knew their intention wasn't to hurt me. The curiosity sometimes made me upset but I always tried to explain my rationale to them. Many times people said to me, 'try tou karo yaar' and pushed me to try non-vegetarian dishes". His voice tinges with cautious optimism as he says, "I completely understand that there are very few Hindus in the student body and it's difficult to make major changes for a few students, however, I would appreciate it if PDC improved their food quality and introduced more vegetarian options in their menu". He suggests removing generally disliked dishes and replacing them with better ones. "I think the quality of daal should also be improved!".

(Continued on <https://dailystudent.lums.edu.pk/>)

*Vegetarianism is the practice of abstaining from the consumption of meat
* Lacto-vegetarian: people who consume dairy products but not eggs.

THE LUMS POST

SPORTS & TRAVEL

October 2021

Issue VIII

Small Fish in a Big Sea: Futsal and Skiing at LUMS

by Khadija Faruqui '24

When people think of sports at LUMS, the most obvious suspects may be our spectacular swimmers or our prolific cricket team. However, even though these may be more popular sports, this certainly does not qualify them as the most significant. Indeed, some of the smallest sporting communities at LUMS are home to the most loyal, passionate, and devoted players.

Futsal

A sport does not have to have an official team to be considered important. One such sport is futsal at LUMS. For this sporting community, futsal is a way to form bonds with each other over their shared love for the sport.

Most people are introduced to futsal at LUMS through LDF: posts are put up detailing when a game is happening and whoever wishes to participate is added into WhatsApp groups. Different groups exist for different locales and most of them meet almost daily to play futsal together. According to Ahsan Khan '22, "There's something really wholesome about futsal and its players, When you play with someone even once you immediately become their 'futsal friend', and then you find yourself being added into groups."

Compared to a football game, futsal games are usually no longer than an hour, require 6-7 people at most, and can be played on almost any surface. Saad Aleem '22 said, "I think students prefer the less formal structure of futsal. You can just grab five friends and play. There are less people and it's a really fast-paced game and you need less stamina."

The adaptable nature of futsal also contributes to its popularity among students: at LUMS, the most used venue is the outdoor basketball court,

where in pre-COVID times games would regularly happen from 10 PM to 2 AM. After COVID, although futsal is not played on campus anymore, futsal devotees have found external venues to play together. Speaking about his experiences with futsal in Lahore, Mustafeez Ahmad '23 told *The Post*, "Futsal can be played on artificial grass also, there are lots of sports complexes dedicated to this. There are so many different venues spread across Lahore alone. Whoever wants to play the game, will find a place [to play it]."

Even though there is no official team for futsal, there have been futsal tournaments organised at LUMS, at the Fall Fests and Spring Fests of earlier years. However, the fact that futsal did not have a proper body to organise it had ramifications for the tournaments. Khan '22 said, "We registered a team for futsal but it was mismanaged especially when compared to other sports like cricket. Matches didn't start on time and no one was taking responsibility." Despite the logistical inefficiency of the tournaments, these festivals were still incredibly enjoyable occasions for futsal players as they competed against other universities for the first time.

The experiences of the Fall and Spring festivals point to how while there is a committed following for futsal at LUMS, the lack of proper direction suffocates the sport's potential. Khan '22 stressed the importance of forming an official team and said, "One futsal team ideally needs 6-7 people and I'm sure there are a lot of people to create a lot of teams for futsal. People who are passionate about futsal, they don't care about any other sport. I just want to play futsal."

The road to getting a team for futsal, may prove much easier than the community expects. *The Post*

reached out to SLUMS and spoke to their Vice President of Training and Development, Fatima Mirza '22, who said, "Right now, futsal comes under football, but if people want to make a completely new team, they can email SLUMS and we will have a meeting with them. We'll see what they want and convey that to the Sports Department, who are always willing for new teams."

Skiing

Having a proper team for a sport does not signal the end of all challenges in the way of playing that sport. There is perhaps no group that knows this better than the LUMS Ski Team and the amateur skiing aficionados at LUMS. In a city like Lahore where the sight of snow is akin to seeing a blue moon, skiers do not get to partake in their sport for the majority of the year.

For amateur skiers and first-timers, the main avenue to go on ski trips is through tours organised by private companies. Since the semester usually ends in late December and the heavy snowfall required for skiing also occurs around this time, skiers at LUMS are left with a very short window of time to embark on ski trips. Daniyal Ahsan '22, an employee for one such company, told *The Post*, "There are two main places we go – Malum Jabba and Naltar. There are professional slopes and then there are beginner slopes, our trips go to the beginner slopes since the people who go with us are mostly first-timers. This has the advantage that if you fall down, the ice is much softer"

For those who wish to pursue skiing in a more professional capacity, the LUMS Ski Team regularly organises trips in the winter break and competes in national tournaments. However, the pitfalls associated with having a love of skiing relate to

how, unlike other sports, skiers do not get to practice their sport year-round. About the challenges of recruitment, Captain of the LUMS Ski Team, Pirzada Hussain Alam '22, said, "We don't have a system to judge how proficient a student is at skiing since we're in Lahore. Because of this, we give preference to people who are from the northern areas and have already been introduced to skiing."

Even if the ski team manages to find skilled members, there are still more challenges which stunt their ability to go on ski trips. The long and sometimes dangerous journeys to Gilgit and KPK often lead to many students not being allowed by their parents to go on these trips. This is especially true in the case of female players. Despite the Ski Team being one of the few mixed sports teams, female members, in particular, find it difficult to go to these trips due to familial concerns. Skiing in itself is also notoriously unsafe as Alam '22 said, "Skiing is a sport in which you are very open to injuries, there are lots of ways you can get hurt."

Perhaps most concerning of all though, is the threat skiers face from climate change - something that has endangered the very existence of the sport itself. Alam '22 revealed, "The snow which falls for the skiing slope to be formed stopped falling at the time of the last tournament, and the slope had to be made artificially. Climate change is really affecting our ability to play our sport."

Despite the many challenges of pursuing skiing, those interviewed by *The Post* emphasised how the ardent skier persists through the difficulties as their passion and love for the sport enables them to do so. Alam '22 said, "The trips are very adventurous. People always enjoy going on them and they will learn a lot at the same time."

A Summer for Escape

by Mohammad Owais Sabri '24

The human need for escape is interesting. It does not sit around and wait for circumstances to fall into place, or for the world to function in a way. It is ever-present, it is persistent and it is profoundly natural. Amongst the thousands of casualties COVID-19 has brought upon us, there exists the very innate human need to escape. The need to leave behind all problems and look for solutions in a foreign place. That ever present need fell victim to the pandemic as it shut us all down. As we emerge out of the pandemic, that innate human need finds new life. A lot of people - way more than pre-pandemic "normal" - have turned towards northern areas for escape. However, the pandemic is not over. With Pakistan averaging over 3000 new pandemic cases every day and the Delta variant looming large, the human tendency to escape yet again finds opposition.

COVID-19 and tourism have been intertwined for as long as the pandemic has existed. In early 2020, the lockdowns forced people indoors and effectively shut the tourism industry worldwide. By mid-April of 2020 the World Tourism Organization was predicting a loss of USD 300-500 million to the tourism industry globally. Therefore, this current boom of people choosing to flock to tourist destinations in Pakistan does make sense.

Fatima Farooq Chishti '24 described her experience of being quarantined and feeling the need to escape often: "Quarantine was as bad as it could be, honestly. At first it was fine, all of us needed a break. Soon the uncertainty and the anxiety just took over." She continued, "Those few months were some of the worst of my life, with nothing to keep me occupied. Coupled with the morbidity of everything that was going on, it was unbearable."

Abdullah Wasif, a high school student from the batch of 2021 also reflected on how quarantine impacted his life as he transitioned into his final year of high school: "I was honestly pretty happy from the break, I felt extremely burnt out by March 2020. But soon it hit me, I would be stuck here for some time. I adopted healthy habits, ate well, tried a lot of self care but nothing was substituting the need to be around people."

For most people, this feeling of isolation eventually led to the aforementioned human need of escape strengthening even more. Chishti explained how she felt the need to escape during quarantine: "I was thinking about a vacation so much and the feeling was getting more and more intense every other moment. I would often find myself looking up hotel prices for Hunza and Naran."

Fatima and Abdullah are not alone in their sentiments. Thousands of people turned towards the northern areas to find some retreat after a year of isolation. Syed Irtaza Ali from Nirvana Adventures shared his insight on how many more people are using their organization to arrange trips to the north of Pakistan: "There's definitely been a significant uptick in the number of people travelling. A lot of people are taking short 3-day trips to the north just to break out of monotone routines they've been stuck in for over a year."

Now that we have established that there is a noticeable trend of people flocking towards northern areas, it is important to understand the implications of this. With over 3000 cases everyday, COVID is well and truly still a presence. What is even more important is that the Delta variant seems more potent against the vaccines publicly available. With the 4th wave picking up in July, it is not unreasonable to state that the tourist density in northern areas is at least part of the reason for the spike in cases. Ali talks about the struggles regarding SOP maintenance on these trips: "Implementing SOPs is paramount for us as an organization. Cleanliness, masks and vaccination certificates are as important as ID cards for us.

Unfortunately, that's not the case for most of the people up-north. Even after an entire year, a lot of them deny that COVID exists in the first place." As Ali tried to rationalize this belief, he said, "It is understandable that they would believe the things that benefit their profits. A massive chunk of revenue coming into these northern areas is through open tourism. It is not unreasonable for them to want it open all year over."

While individually all of these factors may be slightly problematic, collectively they spell danger for the COVID situation in Pakistan. An urge to get out towards the north coupled with the hosts' insistence on keeping SOP maintenance to a minimum meant that COVID-19 cases rose a lot around Pakistan.

As we move into a semester full of equal parts uncertainty and hope, it is interesting to look back at a summer, which was dominated by our desire to escape. It is also intriguing to analyze how that desire has - partially, at least - brought us where we are today. Lastly, it is important that we question if we fed our need to escape too early, or whether an unfulfilled need to escape would have actually crippled us like we thought it would.

Energy Healing (cont.)

by Khadija Faruqui '24

(continued from page 2) So that's how I got here; after she spent around maybe 10 minutes on my head, she then moved to my shoulders, the nape of my neck, my collarbones, my chest, and then my midriff. Before placing her hands anywhere that could be remotely uncomfortable, Mrs. Irfan made sure to ask beforehand if I was okay with it. The contact itself was benign, she would start with poking and prodding at an area and would then rest her hands there. Sometimes her hands wouldn't touch me at all and would instead hover a few centimetres above my body. When I asked her what she was doing, Mrs. Irfan said, "I use reiki with reflexology to identify problem areas in the body where energy is blocked. Then, I channel universal energy to those points."

Whenever she would finish with a particular area, she would ask me if I felt a certain sensation. For example, after she was done with my head, she inquired if my feet felt heavy or if I felt dizzy. While Mrs. Irfan didn't express any approval or disapproval at any of my answers, I felt strangely pressured to say I felt something even though I didn't feel anything at all. Out of sheer social ineptness, I took to giving non-committal responses and saying, "I'm not sure, maybe?" to all her questions. My mind didn't still like it was supposed to, I didn't feel anything really. In fact, I distinctly remember internally panicking during the treatment because I had such a packed schedule that day, and this seemed to be taking forever.

In actuality, the process lasted around 40 minutes, and I was charged Rs. 1000 for the session. After Mrs. Irfan indicated we were finished, I rose from

the table and thanked her. I was more stressed than I had been all day. The anxiety of not wanting to offend someone who had dedicated their entire life to a craft was eating me up from within as I said my goodbyes to Mrs. Irfan.

When I sat in my car, I contemplated the treatment and its effects. I didn't experience any sensations in my body, nor did I feel my restless mind calming. I wondered if perhaps the effects of the treatment would be delayed but as I sit here writing this, it's been over a week and I feel no more refreshed, or at peace than I did before. I don't know if it was my sceptic's mindset that led to reiki not working for me or if the treatment is perhaps rightly labelled a pseudoscience.

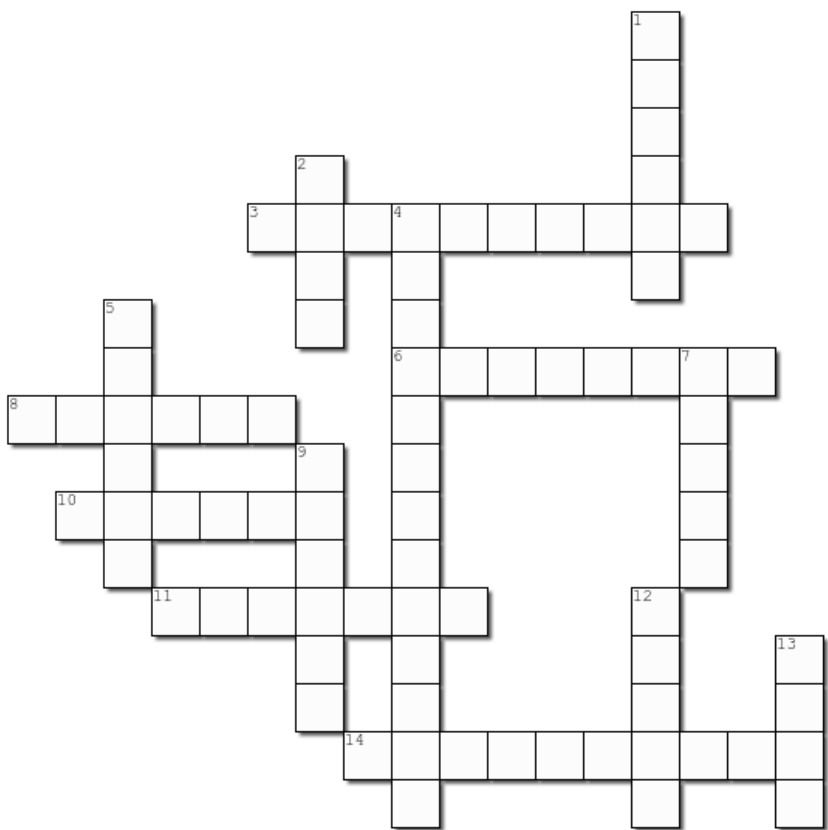
Mrs. Irfan and other reiki devotees swear by the treatment's ability to, if not cure, at least mitigate issues relating to mental and physical health. Some Pakistani hospitals also seem to believe in reiki's effectiveness as they offer it to patients. Additionally, some of the people that I spoke to, who enjoy reiki further attested that it had proven effective for them at pain control and trauma management.

I didn't experience these benefits, but if you're someone who struggles with a health condition, and you've exhausted other solutions - give reiki a try. It might not work, but if it does: wouldn't that be sweet?

Sceptic Score: 2/10
(Mrs. Irfan was really nice, okay?)

Back at LUMS

Khadija Faruqui '24



Across

- only --- students allowed!
- slice slice
- another name for the academic block building
- eurasian republic and LUMS' most exotic resident
- second home during exam sessions
- 11:00 AM panic

Down

- a great place in warzones and in LUMS
- if you don't have this, you can't sit with us
- professors routinely move in circles here
- say a little prayer for you!
- what has coaches, but isn't a sport?
- a type of car and a type of semester
- there are 18 teams under this
- feline food felons

THE LUMS POST

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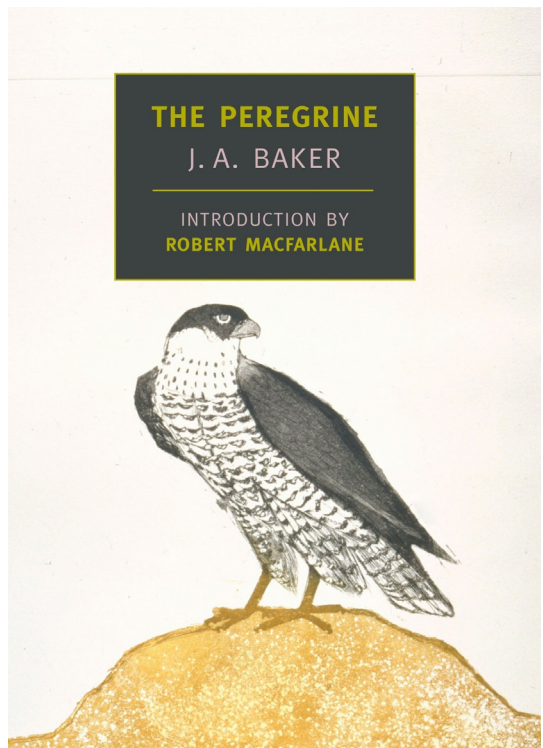
OPINION/EDITORIAL

Best Picks from the Postie's Bookshelf: The Books We Read Over the Summer and Why You Should Check Them Out too! *by Musa Ali Chaudhry '24*

In the age of streaming services and endless digital content, it's understandable that many of us are suffering from shorter attention spans. I believe the idea that books are dying as a result of this change is overly pessimistic. However, I do not think that it is far-fetched to claim that a lot more people are relying on other, snappier mediums to get their daily fix of entertainment and knowledge. As an avid reader, that scares me; I definitely have a personal bias when I say this, but the experience of getting through a good book feels significantly more rewarding than binge-watching a television show or YouTube series.

Alas, book-reading is admittedly a much more daunting habit to get into, especially when one is unsure of what their starting point should be. That is why I took the liberty to compile this short list of digestible reads, spanning a variety of genres across both fiction and non-fiction — with a little help from some friends at *The Post*®. All of these books had some sort of impact on us; some helped us develop a deeper interest for an unexplored subject matter, while others allowed us to appreciate different cultures and ideas. I hope that at least one of the books mentioned here can do the same for you.

*The first five suggestions are my own, and the following five are by friends at *The Post*.



The Peregrine by J. A. Baker
(Passive Writing, Nature Writing, Non-fiction)

The Peregrine is not my favorite book of all time, but it is one that I have found myself thinking about more and more frequently over the past year or so. It is effectively a collection of a decade's worth of bird-watching journal entries, condensed and edited into two hundred or so pages. In theory, this sounds awfully dull, but J. A. Baker is able to utilise some excellent prose and interweave it with his profound ruminations on the human condition and the natural world, creating a surprisingly engaging reading experience.

There's just something about the way that Baker expresses his love (though devotion may be a better word) for peregrine falcons, and how, through their eyes, he is able to paint vivid pictures of the cruelty of post-industrialist society. Moreover, The Peregrine transports one to a time when it was possible for one to dedicate ten years of their life to a singular, lonely pastime — something that feels impossible in the age of social media and limitless bite-sized content. It is an unconventional read, for sure, but an exceedingly important one.

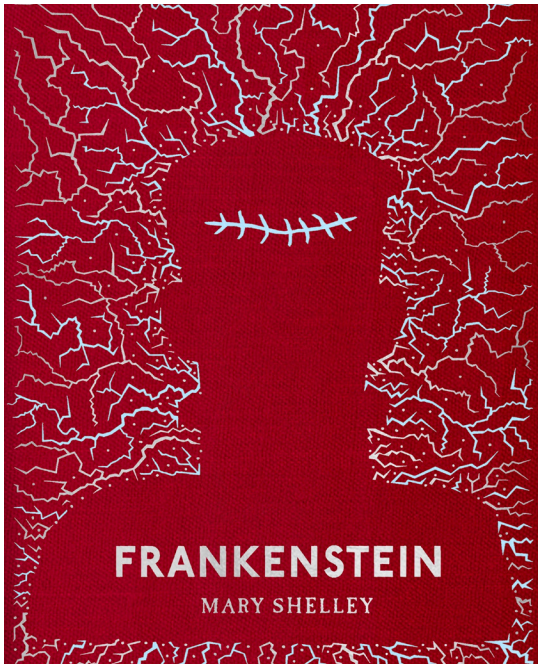
If you enjoy The Peregrine, you might also like: On the Road by Jack Kerouac, The Invention of Morel by Adolfo Bioy Casares.

The Count of Monte Cristo by Alexandre Dumas
(Classics, French literature, Adventure)

I know this might be a crazy idea for a reading list designed for beginners, or people returning to reading after a long time, but I'm going to wholeheartedly recommend that you check out the unabridged version of Alexandre Dumas' famous tome: The Count of Monte Cristo. Yes, it's 1300 pages, but I can guarantee that it'll be the fastest

— and most rewarding — 1300 pages of your life. Dumas is a masterclass in storytelling, and The Count is his crown jewel. The multilayered and complex characters, the vivid descriptions, and an oh-so-satisfying revenge story at the heart of this book make it not only an essential classic, but also one of the most entertaining ones you'll ever read too.

If you enjoy The Count of Monte Cristo, you might also like: Les Misérables by Victor Hugo, Don Quixote by Miguel De Cervantes.



Frankenstein by Mary Shelley
(Classics, Gothic Horror, Science-fiction)

There's an excellent course offered at LUMS on British Romantic Poetry (ENGL 2364) that can be used as a sort of prelude to this book. You see, the significance of Mary Shelley and her writings is that they arrived right as the age of the Romantics was coming to a close (she herself was married to Romantic poet Percy Shelley and was friends with Lord Byron) and it preceded the age of the Gothics. As a result, Frankenstein proves to be a great sampler of both writing styles, with its vividly Romantic prose and Gothic landscapes and atmosphere. It also poses some very interesting philosophical questions on the dynamics of a creator and its creation — in the same vein as the famous myth of Prometheus or the recent sci-fi film Ex Machina.

If you enjoy Frankenstein, you might also like: The Rime of the Ancient Sea Mariner by Samuel Coleridge, Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte.

Letters from a Stoic by Seneca
(Stoicism, Moral Philosophy, Western Philosophy)

Stoicism, as a philosophy and way of life, has seen a recent surge in popularity, and for good reason too: it offers realistic methods to cope with a world where one often feels so out of control. It has helped me, and millions of other people, deal with a stressful work environment and/or personal problems by rationally analysing and accepting difficult situations. While Seneca was definitely not the first Stoic, Letters from a Stoic serves as a great starting point due to its accessibility.

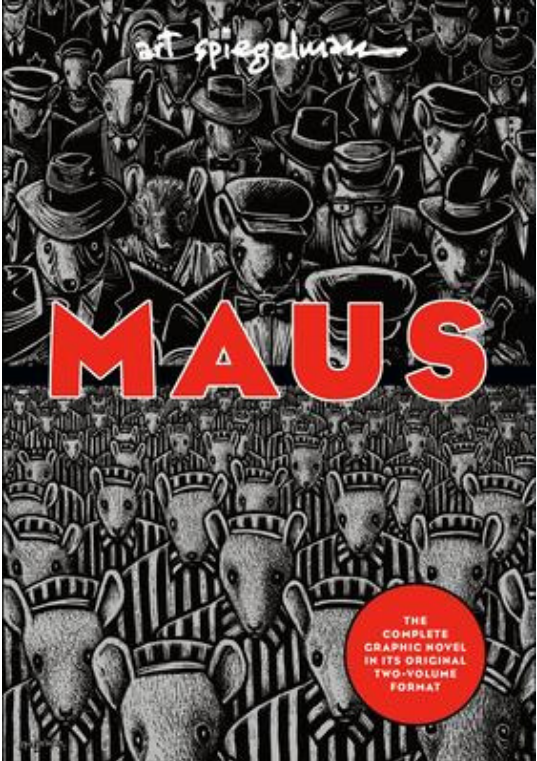
There are a ton of practical lessons in this brief but powerful collection. Letter XXVIII, one of my favorites, discusses the fallacy of travel. "How can you wonder if your travels do you no good, when you carry yourself around with you? You are saddened by the very thing that drove you away," Seneca asks, quoting Socrates. Travel, and other forms of escape, have historically been used by humans to stow away from their problems, but is this doing us more harm than good in the long run? This, and many other questions that Seneca raises throughout Letters from a Stoic, is what drew me in.

If you enjoy Letters from a Stoic, you might also like: Meditations by Marcus Aurelius, Discourses and Selected Writings by Epictetus.

Maus by Art Spiegelman
(Graphic Novels, Biographical)

Aside from a Calvin and Hobbes collection that I absolutely treasured, I had not read a lot of comic books or graphic novels growing up, so I remember being really excited to get into Maus. I had heard high praises, and I knew this was a graphic

novel which really stuck with a lot of people — but none of that could have prepared me for the emotional rollercoaster that I had in store.



Maus is, simultaneously, a family drama and a collection of Holocaust stories. Across its two parts, Spiegelman shows us his strained relationship with his father as he tries to get him to give an account of his days as a Jewish person who lived through Nazi Germany. It is an evocative, heart-wrenching story that proves the storytelling capabilities of graphic novels and says a lot about how one's past shapes their present.

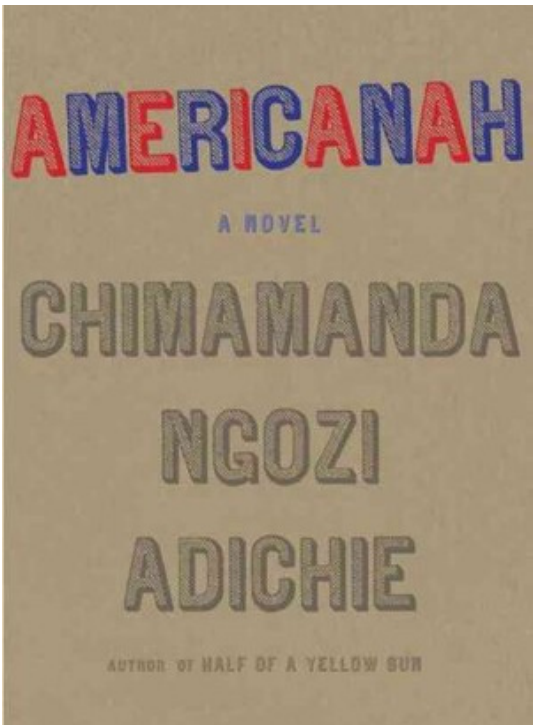
If you enjoy Maus, you might like: Watchmen by Alan Moore, Persepolis by Marjane Satrapi.

On Earth, We're Briefly Gorgeous by Ocean Vuong
(History, Poetry)

I've never been someone who was too interested in studying history, but On Earth, We're Briefly Gorgeous helped change my opinion by showing me human history in a new light — not as a collection of dry, academic passages, but rather the lived experiences of real people. The book is written in the form of a letter by a Vietnamese American to his mother and details the events of the Vietnam war, and especially its effects on Vietnamese women. It also discusses themes of migrating to a foreign land and the difficulties that refugees often have in fitting in.

Overall, this book made me ponder about the human condition and what it means to live in a world that, at times, can feel unbearably vast.

– Hajrah Yousaf '22



Americanah by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
(African Literature, Contemporary)

Adichie has gained an international reputation for her poignant works that explore topics of gender and race, and Americanah is arguably her most famous book. It tells the story of two young lovers that escape the military dictatorship in Nigeria to different ends of the world, and meet again fifteen

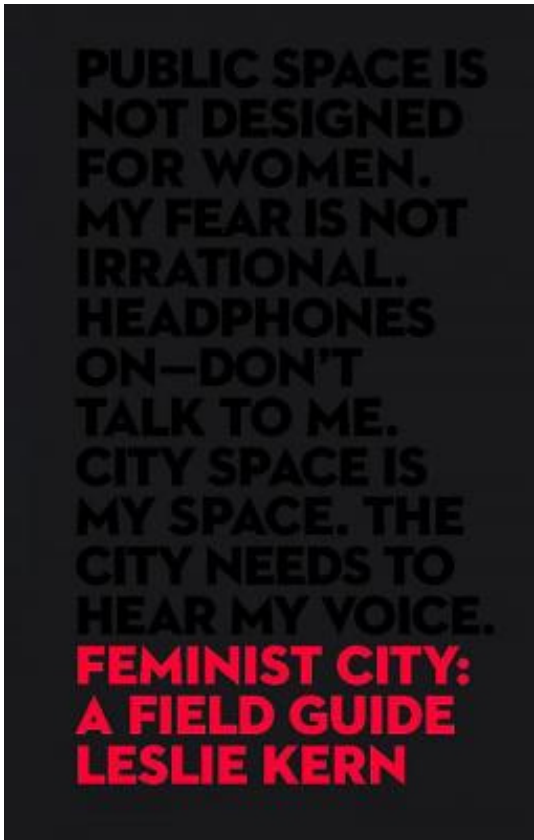
years later. For me, the book was significant since it helped me decolonise my reading significantly and gave me a newfound appreciation for the Nigerian culture and way of life. Moreover, the themes of home, identity, and belonging, all told in her elegant writing style just hit the right way — such an amazing read!

– Zainaab Basil '24

The Age of Innocence by Edith Wharton
(Romance, Modern Classic)

The Age of Innocence is a 1921 novel, famous for winning the first Pulitzer Prize ever awarded to a woman. It tells a story of love and betrayal during the Golden Age in New York — somewhat similar to Fitzgerald's classic, The Great Gatsby. I was particularly moved by the running theme of individuals sacrificing their personal dreams to appease societal goals, an all too relatable experience even a century later. What drew me the most to it though, was the author's nuanced understanding of human nature — people are shackled by conformity and by the time they realise this, it is usually too late to do anything about it.

– Khadija Faruqui '24



Feminist City by Leslie Kern
(Feminism, Urban Planning)

Feminist City serves a brilliant introduction to gendered urban design — it explores the oft-unreported idea of how our cities are designed in a way that excludes and marginalises women, effectively keeping them away from the same facilities that men can access with ease. Though it is based on studies in the West, I felt that many of Kern's findings are applicable to our side of the world too. It honestly opened my eyes and changed the way I look at Lahore as a man-made city. Plus, it's written in a fairly accessible, almost story-like manner and does not feel technical or overly theoretical. Definitely a must-read for anyone interested in the topic!

– Laiba Ahmad '22

In the Dream House by Carmen Maria Machado
(Memoir, LGBTQ+)

At its core, In the Dream House is a memoir about a terribly painful part of Machado's life: it tells the story of her experience being stuck in an abusive same-sex relationship, something that is rather underwritten in the LGBTQ+ community. Not only is the subject matter extremely important, but her wit and courage, along with an exceedingly clever writing style and structure, made this book stand out for me when I first read it. Many times, chapters utilise popular literary tropes — ranging from unreliable narrator to choose-your-own-adventure — and different writing styles (self-help, melodramatic romance, and so on) to create a reading experience that is truly unique.

– Zoha Ahmed '23

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