

THE LUMS POST

April 2022

Issue IX

“Stories from a year of (some) normalcy”



Illustration by Injeel Abdul Aziz '24

Uncle, The Khokha, And Their Centrality To Life At LUMS

by Sara Naseer '26

“Great” – this is the single word that Ijaz uncle (rightly) used to describe the Khokha, his khokha. He set up shop in 1998 and has been a part of the LUMS life for almost 24 years now. Through all the ups and downs, through all seasons, and with students coming and going, uncle has managed to keep serving them cardamom chai and paratha rolls – which are, according to him, the two most popular items available at the Khokha – without fail. Ijaz uncle can often be found behind the till, talking to someone on his mobile phone, while simultaneously listening to a qawwali playing in the background, and collecting money from customers.

Uncle has spent most of his life at LUMS, and he has always tried to provide students with amenities at a reasonable rate, keeping his profit margins very low, so they keep coming. As he said, “Most of my life has gone by here, and I have had an amazing experience at LUMS, not just with the students, but with my coworkers as well.” Despite having faced many challenges, including campus closure due to COVID-19 and two fires destroying most of his stock a couple of years ago, he has kept going. He suffered heavy losses at times, with having no customers during the initial stages of the pandemic, and especially after the fires mentioned above, he had to emerge from the flames anew; it was like having to start over entirely after almost 20 years. Still, despite it all, he put in the effort so all of us could keep going to our beloved Khokha, and he persevered.

It is perhaps Ijaz uncle’s perseverance and his commitment to attracting students to his shop that the Khokha became so central to students’ lives in every way. Be it starting a small busi-

ness for selling home-baked goods, selling event tickets, setting up society stalls, collecting funds for the needy, or expressing creativity through “Khokha Natak”; the Khokha became the center for everything over time.

As Asfand Katchela '26 said, “No Khokha, no party.” The Khokha has become a place where students can gather at any hour of the day, and as a place where one can sit in the hopes of meeting new people and making friends. Saba Urooj '25 expressed her love for the Khokha from a similar point of view, “Leaving the library at 4 am and ending up at a rave at the Khokha automatically lifts my mood and makes me forget all my exhaustion.” Although the opportunity to meet new people is things that students cherish, they have led to rising COVID-19 cases on campus, making the Khokha a central point for the spread of the pandemic across campus and making students even more eager to see COVID-19 come to an end.

All in all, the Khokha is a place notorious for playing ‘rang’ with unfamiliar faces and having cups of chai with familiar ones. It represents the spirit of togetherness on campus, of not being truly alone even if you feel alone, and of having companions to walk with you through your university experiences. It represents the idea of being able to breathe in the air that is filled with a plethora of smells wafting from chais and paratha rolls at every table, and air which is filled with love, friendship and the tunes of random songs which one can’t help but sing along to. Just hearing the word “Khokha” can trigger so many memories in one’s mind – and I can say with some surety that most of them will bring a smile to your lips.



Easing Into Normalcy: The Uncertainty of It All

by Iman Attique '25

As the last remnant of an early February evening morphs into night, a buzz of activity fills up the campus air. The end of a rigorous stretch of classes is marked by students making their way around campus to catch up with friends before calling it a day. Some run around in the courts, getting their much-needed boost of endorphins. Others seek refuge in the quiet of the cricket ground – sometimes jamming to old classics. Within the context of a global pandemic, this semblance of everyday university life is nowhere more profound than at the campus’ favourite spot: the khokha. Here, the daily hustle-bustle is quite a welcome contrast to the frequently empty benches from the start of the academic year – an indicator that campus life, amidst all uncertainty, has gradually found its way back.

With its start from the much-hyped O-week '21, the Fall semester had raised hopes among the student body of more campus integrated activities, both academic and otherwise. These hopes were short-lived as coronavirus cases took a rise in the country, cutting O-week short and forcing day scholars to revert to their study-from-home routines. Following the latest NCOC’s directives, campus access was granted to all fully vaccinated students and so the start-of-semester blues were somewhat remedied.

In subsequent times, significant efforts helped raise the campus morale that had been running low. For one, the reopening of the indoor Pepsi Dining Centre was met with contentment by day-scholars and hostelites alike, who revelled in the nostalgia of having meals with friends. With its launch in October, Baradari Cafe soon made it to the list of go-to places on campus for good food at affordable rates and its cosy outdoor seating. Additionally, the execution of numerous social events and batch nights has provided students with a healthy change in routine. Among these were the Men’s T20 Cricket World Cup match screenings from

October to early November. With Pakistan’s extraordinary run in the Super Twelve fixtures, these screenings amassed huge crowds, becoming a semester highlight for both hard-core cricket fanatics and seasonal viewers of the sport. As Mishal Razi '24 aptly puts it, “You see the crowd gathered in the cricket ground here, and generally everywhere across the country, and realise it’s true: Nothing brings our nation together more than a game of cricket.”

Ayra Tariq '24, an organiser for the event and a member of the Student Council, looked back on the O-weekend saying, “One fear that was common to all sophomores was that we’ll never get to experience the pre-covid ‘fun’ LUMS. With these two nights and the events that have followed, it seems as though we are slowly inching towards the old ways so that’s very reassuring.” And reassuring it is – seeing the lively and energetic faces as students attempt to make their way through the semester unscathed.

Everyone indulged in this short-lived normalcy on campus unaware of what was to come. Soon enough, the Omicron variant hit home, cases on campus surged and curfews were imposed. Among the students most impacted by such back and forth are the day-scholars, who woke up each day not knowing if their campus access will be revoked.

With the pandemic shaping our university experience, uncertainty is here to stay. No one knows when the next wave will sweep over us and so the repetitive cycle of restrictions continues. While it is great to see campus phasing into normalcy once again, with the threat of Omicron still lingering over our heads, we must conform to social distancing measures as we go about our everyday lives. If we wish to get through the ongoing Spring semester with campus functioning in the way we all love to see it, cooperation is our best way forward.

THE LUMS POST

FEATURES

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The News of my Rejection was Slightly Underreported

by Mebrunissa Sultan Awan '25

Documentation forms an integral part of any student's academic career, in fact, it is arguable that to be a student means to be documented as one. The same is true for health as, increasingly, it is understood as a record of health rather than wellbeing. When these two intersect, particularly here at LUMS in the form of OSA petitions, many complex problems and questions arise.

In order to be excused from graded, and other instruments, it is necessary to get a petition approved by the Office of Student Affairs (OSA). This petition is a PDF, dreaded by many, requiring identification of the petitioner, details of courses and cause for requesting a petition. Seemingly straightforward, why has this pdf document become an object of misery for many? The answer is manifold.

There are structural caveats both in terms of the form as well as handling by OSA. At the crux of it, it appears that the process, though systematic, is arbitrary in its outcome. Where Subhan Ali '24, a member of the Student Council, states that the process is detailed and fair, considering OSA looks at facts of the case rather than the emotional appeal of a student, Shaukat Gillani '25 believes that the fact that OSA approved a petition for his dog's death is due to his sentimental approach to the section requiring details of cause for request.

Similarly, students are asked to provide documentation as proof, which is a more than reasonable requirement, but when this translates to students needing to get expensive tests done which is true for Saad Hasnain '24, it becomes a problem. In Hasnain's case, his doctor informed him that the NS1 antigen test for dengue was not needed since it is only valid when one initially catches the disease, but OSA shortened his petition citing the missing test as the reason, despite a medical professional, and other reports, saying he did in fact have dengue.

Apart from this, Sarem Anwar '24 has pointed out the "insensitive" replies and repeated rejection from OSA's end since he suffers from epilepsy, a chronic illness. His case was only resolved because a Student Council member reached out and personally took his case to the Dean of OSA, who then directed Anwar '24 to the Office of Accessibility and Inclusion, who were kinder and helpful.

Inevitably, the general sentiment surrounding filing a petition is horror and uncertainty. Even if students have their petition accepted, filling it out entails a certain discomfort as happened with Omaira Muhammad '25, who had to do so with blurry vision immediately after an eye surgery. Students are forced to first bear what is happening to them and then bear its documentation, at the mercy of an unknown criteria which determines the validity of their request - a process that is tiresome and, at times, debilitating.

The Post reached out to OSA for a comment but received no reply.

The problems are many and the solutions simple. On OSA's part, it is necessary to streamline the process of submitting and approving petitions, as well as making it transparent. It would be helpful if the criteria for approval were made clear to students, or perhaps the cause for rejection told to them. Instead of a pdf, it would be more efficient to create something similar to an online form that students can access when needed instead of having to ask for a copy of the form, which also eliminates issues with response time. Even a simple tutorial in O'Week as to how to fill in a petition would be a start. All in all, an empathetic approach to students already struggling would help in developing a more productive relationship between the student body and administration.

***Names have been changed in this story to preserve source anonymity.

OPINION/EDITORIAL

The Swings

Abdullah Mian '25

Whenever I have a bad day or week, I find myself being inexplicably drawn to the swings that stand on the far end of the campus, right beside the cricket ground. I do not understand why I like them so much, all I know is that I love their vibe.

I go there when I feel horrible about myself, or anything in general, and just swing as high as I can while listening to the worst music possible on my 250Rs SDSB merch shop headphones. Sometimes I can see the moon right above, although it is more often than not outshone by the humongous lights on the Aquatic Centre. It is embarrassing to admit the number of times I mistook a light for the moon.

If I swing high enough, I can see people playing in the football ground and roughly follow whatever is happening. I despise the fact that the parking lot is right behind. The cars passing over the loose gutter produce a very annoying clang thud sound, which always derails my train of thought.

But that is just a minor flaw: there are many things to enjoy while swinging. You can look across the cricket ground and silently cheer for the people who insist on jogging round and round the cricket ground as their bodies scream at them to stop. I have started to look forward to seeing the same people there regularly. I admire their ability to push themselves continually to do something incredibly tiring day after day, no matter what. I envy their motivation. How does it feel to know what you want, and have the strength to go after it?

However, I don't worry too much about my lack of physical exercise - an hour of swinging feels like a full body workout to me (which is not something to flex, I realise). My favourite part of the swings is the sheer diversity of events that I witness. Maybe it is reasonable to witness at least a few unusual events if I spend so much time in one location, but I like to think that the events around the swings are especially unique.

Once, as I swung there, I noticed a small boy on a bicycle speeding towards the swings. I assumed he would stop, as any rational individual careening towards gigantic metal bars would, but I was wrong - he drove straight into the poles of the swings and banged his head super loudly on the central A-shaped pole. Recovering immediately, he reversed a few inches and proceeded to cycle off into the distance as if nothing had happened at all. I would like to hope that he's okay, but the bang with which he collided suggests otherwise.

Another time, I was with a friend and we were listening to qawwalian while we subjected our ankles to blunt force trauma, and somehow the people on the other swing set joined our conversation. We talked about the most diverse range of topics you can imagine. I do not open up to old friends as much as I opened up to those people. One moment we were talking about how we all got rejected from Stanford, and the next we were talking about how to write code to implement an algorithm for irrigation in MATLAB. I do not remember how long we talked, but it is one of my fondest memories.

Oh also: I once saw a T-Rex at a birthday party at 12am on the swings. I will give no more context.

I asked Salman Haider Zaidi '26 what he liked best about the swings: "What I personally love about the swings and the general area around them is that everyone minds their own business - yes, this is true for LUMS in general but even more so over there."

Many times, I have seen someone on an adjacent swing crying, having an angry conversation on the phone, or just staring at something distant. I have done similar things, and I love that everyone's privacy is assured and no one is nosy - we all understand and leave the other to their own devices. There are times when we just want to be by ourselves, and strangers interfering or trying to be saviours just makes things even worse.

More than anything, this sense of peace and privacy and personal space that being on the swings guarantees is probably what people are attracted to. Every day in LUMS is a constant barrage of pressure to socialise, socialise, and socialise, and it gets tiring. My social battery runs out ten minutes into a conversation with a group of people, though I guess others are a bit stronger. But we all need a break, and need to be alone from time to time, so we seek out places where we can just exist with no external pressures to put up a facade or pretend to be interested in someone's extremely monotonous story.

However, in the end, we are humans who have responsibilities and the need to socialise. We all have to leave our metaphorical "swings" sooner or later, and go back to doing things we do not really like but cannot really live without. But it is nice to have these "swings". It is nice to have a place to go to when you just want a break.

A quote from a student from the junior batch succinctly encapsulates: "I don't know, I just like swinging, I don't think too much about it."

Subcontracting: The Worker at the Intersection

by Mabeen Azmat '24

It is a normal day on campus. There is the noise of excited chatter carried through the air, the frenzied movement of students rushing through the campus to get to their classes, and an influx of students at the khokha, reenergizing themselves by hanging out with their friends and soaking in the winter sun. On the periphery, there is someone mechanically sweeping the dirt off of the floor, picking up remnants of yesterday's hangouts, melting into the background. The back of his shirt reads, "ABC," the name of the current subcontracting company at LUMS. He is just one of the many such workers who comprise the janitorial staff at LUMS.

"Some of them have been here longer than what some of us can even conceive of," says Arham Sarfraz '22, who has been at the forefront of organising against subcontracting at LUMS. The history of subcontracting at LUMS can be traced back to 2012, when the university first outsourced its janitorial staff from BROOMS. According to an archive prepared by the student-led society, Hum Aahang (which identifies the end of this system as one of its leading goals), workers then protested for their right to be paid salaries in accordance with the Minimum Wage Act of 2012 by refusing to enter the university premises. After being dismissed, however, conditions continued to be dire for the workers, who were now also facing pay cuts. Moreover, being numerically constrained, the staff were finding it increasingly difficult to manage their work, given the vastness of the university premises.

What followed has now become a recognisable pattern, and a predictable line of action that allows for the subcontracting system to remain in place, while giving the pretense of some kind of change: workers are fired, the student body, momentarily horrified, rally against the outrageous conditions of these workers, the administration responds by forming a committee, and the subcontracting company is replaced by yet another company that continues to uphold the same culture of exploitation towards the janitorial staff.

This cycle has repeated itself with painful certainty, as BROOMS was replaced by MOPS, which was then replaced by MBM, and so on and so forth. These years have been plagued by accusations of harassment, forceful transfers and arbitrary dismissals. However, they were also punctuated by some revolutionary protests like the Easter Protest held in 2019 by the workers where

they were able to obtain the money that they were originally promised for Easter. Yahya Aftab '19, a LUMS alumnus who has been an active proponent for the movement against subcontracting, acknowledges that while the end-goal remains subcontracting, it is important to recognise the significance of such protests for what they were able to achieve, given what was at stake.

While this holds true, recent protests against the firing of supervisors and workers (with the replacement of ABC with D-source), have led to the administration promising to take a more proactive role to ensure workers' rights. After talks between the administration and some members of the student body, there seems to be a general consensus about providing immediate benefits to the janitorial staff. These include the establishment of a grievance committee for the purposes of having something that resembles an appeals process in case of a transfer/dismissal, increased wages, paid leaves as well as social security benefits. Within their own capacity, the student body has also been rallying to raise funds to aid the janitorial staff that has been laid off.

Where does all of this leave the workers now then? "Things are somewhat better this time around, with the provision of sick leaves and social security," says Professor Ali Raza, who teaches at the Department of History. However, this change, he argues, is more so due to the pressure of the students and the faculty, rather than any improvement within the system itself. Given the extraordinary circumstances by way of the pandemic, while there still seems to be some ambiguity around just how many workers were laid off, there is a recognition of the fact that on ground, the conditions for the workers on ground at the moment are not very promising. "There has also been an issue with continuity with there being a disconnect between the students and the workers, due to the pandemic," says former President Hum Aahang, Kumail Haider Jafri '22.

For now, while there seems to be an air of uncertainty and mistrust between the administration and the student body, there is also willingness to engage in discussions for the implementation of clauses that benefit the workers. At the same time, these students remain undeterred, and maintain that while securing short-term benefits is important, the end-goal for them is still a complete overhaul of the system itself.

LUMS and Subcultures

by Aleena Faisal '24

The shift from A levels to college does mean a change. The tiny subcultures you so carefully crafted during your years of schooling, your gentle attempts at building a community, are thrown into a glass of boiling milk and melt like chocolate. The result is not necessarily bad, but it is still different. And although everyone loves hot chocolate, the burnt tongue on your hasty first sip is not everyone's cup of tea. For Ammar Abdullah Aziz '24, the transition is something everyone goes through naturally with a change in environment, and like any change, different people will adapt differently to it. By their sophomore year, he believes, they begin to settle in. To him the major change comes from the structure of college itself, namely, different classes each semester and clubs.

Many clubs are formed around activities which in A levels, or high school, were considered subcultures within themselves, for example anime or MMA (Mixed Martial Arts). "MMA was pretty much picking up traction in A levels and didn't really burst onto the scene," says Rayaan Sohaib '25. He talks about how the conversation surrounding MMA has shifted in college so much so that "it no longer feels like a niche thing" and that LUMS generally has a "more inviting environment."

This thought is mirrored by Tahira Zaman '25, "The transition [To LUMS] has been really easy for me in a way because this is exactly where I wanted to be, [to] get away from everybody trying to indoctrinate me all the time and just explore in a [more] free environment."

For freshmen living on campus, who have come from other cities, the experience is a little different. Altamash Khaliq '25, from Islamabad, and Muhammad Ahmed '25, from Dharki, both describe how community life here was very, "fast paced" when compared to back home. Mahnum Cheema '25, who is taking her first semester online from Jeddah, admits that for international

students the transition is perhaps less smooth, as a member of the PhotoLUMS coverage team, she cannot exactly cover anything from off-campus, much less find a community to slip into.

Hania Asad*, currently doing her A Levels from LGS, described how options for finding a community, or activities to do with said community, are limiting in high school for queer individuals, "You mostly only find other queer kids through knowing a friend who knows a friend who knows a friend and so on." However, according to Asad, this too can be as alienating as liberating when they find this one tiny community.

The difference when coming into college for queer students is, "People just don't care as much," Eman Rahim '25*, "Everyone knows someone or their friend who is queer, you meet people on campus all the time and it's much easier to find a community."

Every person spoken to acknowledged that in some ways or the other, LUMS was bigger and broader, and that whilst that adjustment can be hard, it inevitably means that your choices are not limited. Queer students can be MMA students, MMA students can be part of the anime community, the anime community can be part of the music kids, "I spent a lot of time just always trying to defy a lot of things, like always being the one to protest... but in LUMS, everything is almost impossible to protest, there's always two sides or an option (in between)," explains Zaman '25.

The common contender seems to be, that whereas in school you would have to build a community out of people you already knew, doing things you had always done, in college you have a plethora of communities to choose from, and the subcultures you decide to partake in are not an iron cage of labels. If Troy Bolton can play ball and sing in musicals, well, the possibilities are endless.

*Names have been changed to preserve anonymity

Letters to the Editor

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THE LUMS POST

ARTS & CULTURE

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LUMS: Providing the right to Fashion

by Iman Ahmad '24

Mukhtar '24* leaves her home wearing two layers of clothing, the inner layer of her choice and the outer that she is expected to wear by her family. Arriving at LUMS, she then finds a bathroom, which functions as a plausible place for her transformation to occur. She sheds off the outer layer, and adjusts her clothes underneath, unveiling her true self.

The ability to choose how to dress is very much a common right, but in Pakistan the right to fashion remains a privilege not afforded to communities like women or the LGBTQ+ who are policed on their clothing choices. From political leaders claiming that women wearing jeans causes earthquakes to strict gender binaries set up in society, Pakistan has left little self-expression at the hands of individuals. Thereby, Mukhtar's daily routine has become a characteristic of LUMS itself, followed by many marginalized students who view privatized places like University as a safe place where they can showcase their authentic selves through fashion.

In conversation with Sunya Sheikh '24 about fashion on campus, she claimed, "I always have to think twice about my clothing before I step outside in Pakistan but when I go to university, I do not have this same fear instilled within me." This feeling of safety pertains to many students at the University who feel like they finally have the chance to wear what they want without the fear of getting reprimanded. Mukhtar* also agrees with this sentiment as she believes that LUMS has given her a place to demonstrate the little amount of freedom she has left as a woman by giving her the choice to plan her own outfits, giving her confidence and hope that one day she will not have to hide her fashion.

The freedom to dress has also helped students experiment with their looks and identity. Ali '25*, who identifies with the LGBTQ+ detailed that during the Masquerade Ball event hosted by LCSS, they wore eyeliner for the first time which they really enjoyed, as it made them feel comfortable with themselves. Muhammad Abu Bakr '23 also spoke about how he was really grateful to get campus access early on, as last semester his decision to get his ears pierced and eyebrows waxed was met with ridicule from his family. However, to him the



campus felt like a place of freedom where others were non-judgmental or even indifferent towards his new appearance.

Thus, the right to fashion has also heightened many students' university experience as they feel they are not putting on a facade to fit in. After all, as Mukhtar* points out, fashion is an integral part of self-identity and one's choice of clothing helps emanate who they are as a person. Abu Bakr also explained that LUMS has given a place to freely express his sexuality which has made

university life more enjoyable for him as he gets to be his unapologetic self.

This general feeling of safety also extends to the atmosphere of the student body, which promotes itself on being inclusive and non-judgmental. Sheikh says, "I feel like the way I choose to dress on campus also has a lot to do with the people I surround myself with. I am lucky that they do not judge me." Therefore, the comfort that these communities feel is dependent upon who they are surrounded by and the fact

I feel. We are still in Pakistan, and people expect you to dress a certain way." This statement is true as it relates to the fear of harassment and bullying that persists in the LUMS environment, on and offline. While talking to Ahmed '25*, he revealed that when deciding what to wear on campus, he keeps societal expectations in mind, choosing some colours over others. He also detailed his experience of living in the male hostels, pointing out how someone doubted his religious intent and mocked his nail polish saying, "ye toh larkiyan lagaati hai" Thus, he explained that the cost of his safety outweighed his own personal desire to wear nail polish, dictating that the world is not that accommodating and neither is LUMS.

Many fear a stricter dress code being enforced that would limit the amount of power one has over their clothing, especially in classrooms to adhere to a conduct of professionalism. However, as Associate Professor Dr. Faisal Bari points out in his recent DAWN article, if 18 year olds are allowed to marry, vote, drive and have children, one is left to wonder why institutes need to police the way students dress?

LUMS is also a bubble that easily bursts when one steps outside the peripheries of the gate. Day scholars, in particular, face the dehumanizing problem of having to live double lives, constantly fluctuating back and forth between outfits when entering and leaving the gate. Ahmed* said that even though he is a hostelite, when he FaceTimes his grandparents back home, he consciously moves his hands away from the camera in fear of his family seeing his nail polish which is disheartening because he has to hide parts of himself to be accepted.

***Names have been changed to protect source anonymity.

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THE LUMS POST

SPORTS & TRAVEL

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Issue IX

Cricket: Pakistan Loses, but LUMS Finds Itself Once Again

by Khadija Faruqui '24

Pakistan's dream run in the 2021 T20 World Cup had fans—both seasonal watchers and religious observers—glued to their screens. From that first glorious match against India to the heart-stopping semi-final, students at LUMS enjoyed the Pakistan team's games through various screenings held for every match played. Initially organised by the administration, the management of the screenings was soon taken over by Sports at LUMS (SLUMS) and served as an opportunity for students to come together and join in the patriotic fervour only cricket can inspire.

The first screening, and arguably the most anticipated match of the whole tournament, ended up being a disjointed affair. With the administration cancelling the planned screening at the Khokha due to SOP violations, students resorted to watching the match in small pockets either on their own devices or at cafes like The Bunker. From the next game onwards, SLUMS assumed control and the rest of the group stage screenings were regularly shown at the cricket ground. At 7 PM every match day, swarms of students descended on the ground, grabbed themselves a bite to eat, and settled in for a thrilling three and a half hours.

Despite the new management, there were some issues that persisted with the screenings. The Post spoke to attendees and found that the viewings of the initial matches were dogged with problems such as: low screen height, low volume, a lagging livestream, and concerns over there being no female-only sitting area. However, viewers were surprised and pleased with the urgency with which SLUMS responded to and adapted to these complaints. Zainab Reza '22 said, "The screenings got better with time. The latest one was the best yet

because they listened to all the feedback we gave, [for example] they made a female-only sitting area and they made the screen a little higher for everyone to see."

The result of this labour: an efficiently organised event that soothed the aches of isolation experienced by students over the last two years. For many, especially freshmen, who have not found their tribe at LUMS yet; the screenings were an opportunity to bond with their peers over their joint love of cricket. Mian Shehryar



'22 applauded the management of the screenings and said, "My screening experience was very good, I really enjoyed the vibe, especially of the screenings at the cricket ground. It's this atmosphere where everyone is rooting for the same team, we're all united, at that time we don't have disagreements, we just want our team to win."

For many students, on an ordinary day watching cricket would be a boring activity and one they would be uninterested in. However, the

atmosphere created by the screenings and the allure of potentially watching your country win the World Cup attracted even the most stubborn of holdouts to the game. Abdullah Naveed '23 said, "I never watch cricket at home. I don't even like cricket but when all my friends are going, I go as well. I know that these are memories that will last forever."

The sheer spectacle of the screenings was such that some students felt that the energy of the crowd was more magnetic than the matches

screenings acted as evidence that the electric energy and exciting night-life that had once characterised LUMS had been preserved despite the break. Reza '22 said, "In pre-COVID times, this was the norm: friends getting together to watch cricket or on national holidays on Eid and Diwali. We always used to celebrate these things at LUMS. There was always something or the other happening at LUMS."

Despite the exciting atmosphere created by the screenings, there were still aspects of the organisation that led to anxiety among students. While the COVID aspect of the screenings was well-managed with SOPs being strictly enforced, the threat of dengue still loomed over the open grass screenings. Muhammad Yousif Khan '24 said, "There was a concern over dengue among many people and this was something that should have been addressed, there should be sprays or something beforehand."

In spite of these issues, the screenings will be remembered as memorable occasions where the community came together on such a grand scale for the first time in a long time. For seniors like Shehryar '22 experiencing their last few months at LUMS, the combination of watching a sport he loved with people who loved it just as much was an incredibly emotional experience. He said, "Organising events like these is so important because cricket is not just a game in our country, we have been raised to love this game, and to be very excited about this game. Here it was so different because you could just scream and express yourself and be happy. The semi-final game was an excellent game of cricket. I loved that game but I got very sad at the end, I even cried. But these are memories that I can never forget."

A Trifecta of Ailments: Covid, Dengue, Smog, and the Student

by Zohair Abbas Rizvi '24

"Never before has LUMS seen such a massive influx of OSA petition requests," claims Muhammad Atif Usmani from the Office of Student Affairs. From late October till the end of November, and even now, Luminites have had to deal with a sort of a "triple threat" – a trifecta of ailments consisting of COVID, Dengue and Lahore's persisting smog crisis. The severity with which these forces have assailed the student body is unprecedented, and has put them in a precarious situation where many seem to have lost the reins to their academic life.

Qasim Fareed '25 recalls how, after contracting COVID in October, he noticed a considerable decline in his academic performance. "It was not a fun experience", he says as he recalls how his worsening condition detrimentally affected his mid-semester graded components. "In a way, I'm still dealing with the aftermath of COVID," he adds, "since I now have no margin for error left in the courses I have this semester." From across all batches, students like Fareed '25 now have the odds stacked against them as they struggle to keep themselves afloat.

COVID is a familiar foe for most, but last semester introduced many to the perils of dengue for the very first time. During the month of November, there was a surge in dengue cases like never before, and the Office of Student Affairs struggled to keep up with the petition requests that were sent their way on a daily basis.

Taneer Jannat '24, who suffered from a harsher case of dengue, shared how her symptoms – ranging from the typical (severe) body aches to nausea – detrimentally affected her performance in various courses. "I was confined to a hospital ward with a drip attached to my arm because I couldn't physically bring myself to eat anything," she

recalls with a shudder.

When the question of academic performance was put forth, she scoffed cynically. "Missing two weeks' worth of lectures in HSS is a big deal," she states. The struggle of catching up on missed readings and essays, especially without the luxury of recorded lectures in most cases, has been felt by just about everyone that contracted the dengue virus.

Affectees like Taneer had vastly different experiences in this regard. Saad Hasnain '24, who was hospitalized with an extreme case of dengue, claims that he had no trouble catching up on missed work due to his accommodating instructors this semester. However, not everyone is as favored by Zambeel as Hasnain is.

The particular case of smog in Lahore poses a complex problem for the average student. Arhum Khawaja '24, a hostelite from Karachi, claims that the polluted air of Lahore triggers his allergies. Being exposed to the smog for prolonged periods of time causes blisters to appear on his hands, and the constant irritation has gotten in the way of the rigorous demands of his SSE courses. Despite this, he hesitates to apply for an OSA petition or any form of concession, and remarks that he is skeptical of the Office's understanding since his instructors refuse to acknowledge his smog related challenges.

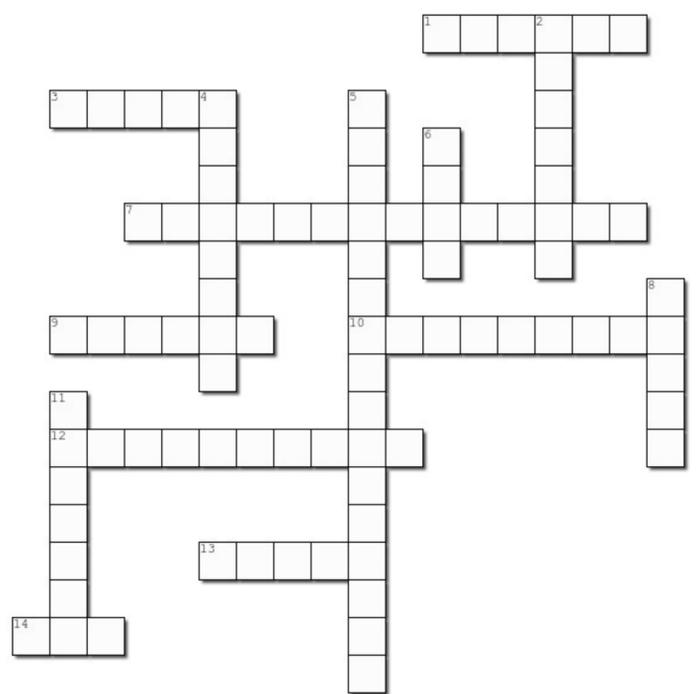
Fall 2021 heralded the return of some sense of normalcy for us, but that soon turned out to be short lived. The threatening pathological climate that was allowed to develop from mid-October onwards has inevitably played a part in jeopardizing academic performance across all batches and, with the recent release of grades, students may find themselves wondering: "What if we had not fallen ill?"

themselves at times. Reza '22 explained, "The crowd, the energy, the sound, the music, in the interludes they were putting on Pakistani music so the patriotism in the air made it pretty exciting and much more fun than if we had watched it from home."

The contrast of the passion and pandemonium of the screenings struck many veteran students who were moved by how the university had regained the liveliness it was known for. After two years of silence and isolation, the

Cricket

Khadija Faruqui '24



Across

1. pakistan's most successful test captain
3. home of cricket
7. nice new zealand batsman
9. a type of ball but also an urdu word
10. best english all-rounder
12. captain banned for a year in 2018
13. first world t20 winners
14. usually the highest possible score in one shot

Down

2. domestic t20 league in Australia
4. murali, warne, ajmal are all ---
5. remember the name!
6. cricket, jail, cricket
8. test series played every other year
11. retired captain cool

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