

Highway

SPRING 24

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FAST LITERARY
SOCIETY



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HighWay

Stories on every Step

Volume 1

Spring '24

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Message From The Director



Dear All,

I am pleased to announce the launch of literary magazine named Highway from the platform of Literary Society. The aim of the magazine is to encourage reading for pleasure, with a careful analysis of both fiction and nonfiction as endeavors with positive social impacts. The literary magazine will provide students with opportunities to participate in a variety of activities, including reading insightful prose, poetry, short stories, letters to foster the literary understanding of multiple genres. Beyond the academic curriculum, the magazine intends to promote self-expression, brush up on writing abilities and improve literary creativity. The Literary Society welcomes anyone who wishes to have the platform to showcase their imaginative ideas and persuasive writing skills.

Dr. Summaira Sarfraz

Director - FAST LHR

FROM THE EDITORS DESK

People of FAST,

We are beyond thrilled to introduce HighWay, the first ever E-magazine of FAST NUCES Lahore. HighWay is more than just a place for us. Its the path where our laughter and tears, triumphs and struggles, and memories and moments all come together. This road is a symbol of hope. For generations, it has transformed our fears and wishes into dreams and aspirations, and it will continue to do so for many more to come.

Our E-magazine is divided into four major sections, each representing a season and its unique significance, starting with the freshness of winter, and leading to the richness of autumn.

Within these pages, you'll find a tapestry of stories, poems, and artwork that resonate with your own journey. Our talented team has poured their hearts and souls into creating something truly special, and we hope you'll treasure this edition for years to come.

We hope you find as much joy in reading these pages as we found in creating them for you.



Sheherbano

Editor In Chief

Faraz Malik

Managing Editor

Behind The Scenes With Campus Leaders

President-FAST Literary Society



Maidah

The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.

President - GDSC



Ali Hamza

You only live once, but if you do it right, once is enough.

PRESIDENT - SOFTEC



Syed Ali Raza

If you want to test a mans character, give him power.

President - FAST Business Club



Usama Shakeel

Its all about Niyyat.

President - FAST CARE



Noreen Fatima

When we hit our lowest point, we are open to the greatest change.

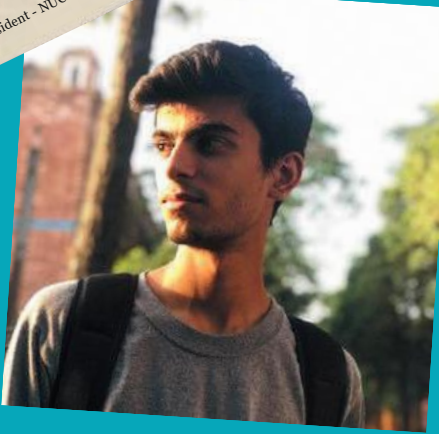
President - Fast Music Society



Hamza Choudhary

Stuff happens, we move on

President - NUCES Fun Trackers



Mahd Bin Tariq
Not all those who wander are lost.

President - STACKS



Samina
To handle yourself, use your brain. To handle others, use your heart.

PRESIDENT - IEEE



Zainulabideen
You are , what you believe yourself to be

President - MLSA



Abdullah Awan
An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind

President - ASCE



Shehryar Asim Khan
When climbing a mountain, watch the next 3 steps, not the 1000 metres above.

سنو اے لوگوں ، میں اِس تنہائی شب میں کیا دیکھتا ہوں
زرا بیزار ہوں ، آئینہ ماضی میں عکسِ حال دیکھتا ہوں

جو بھڑکتیں تھی قلبِ جد میں انگاریاں
اپنے جگر خستہ میں اسی آگ کا شعلہ میں فعال دیکھتا ہوں

گو کہ برسرِ پیکار ہے تاریکی باطل
میں اس اندھیرے کو دھلانے والا اک ہلال دیکھتا ہوں

جانتا ہوں زمانہ میں ہے قحط ہے مثل کا دور آج
مگر میں آبِ غیبی سے پروان چڑھتا اک نہال دیکھتا ہوں

اے بے خبر دیکھا ہے میں نے وقت کے اس پار بھی
وہاں بھی سربلند حق اور باطل کو زر و بال دیکھتا ہوں

محمد حماد مصطفیٰ





Seeping Malaise

you devouring regrets; in reverse

Uncover ailed eyelids
Versus twin universes buried
Witness the curses hoarded
Exhaust from accused selfness.

Am I awake?

Am I dead?

Maple coloured flora and foliage
Fraying, dancing, expelling
Reminiscing a long gone failing
Revolution, safety fading away

Where am I?

Is this thought?

The drowning sun wanes on paths untaken
Warmth suddenly hewn, a barbed chill near
Regret punctured, its shadow unraveling
Whispers of wry relics, an echoing fear

It's getting colder!

Is there a fire?

Pearly precipitation begins its ancient descent
Translucent kryptonite, the memories cast away
Menacing malevolent white, a majestic sight
Soaring subtly and superfluous, a shroud awry

Help! Help!

Is there anyone?

A sleeping malice, bygone failures in the trench
World now cloaked in leaden clouds, hues of anguish
An imperial scream, the castaway awakes for revenge
Cyan crystals begin to forge, a vice of bitter sting

Perhaps this is entirety of suffering itself?

Frozen knives cascading, ballistic
Shards of serenity, in a ray of light
Pierce the incompetent heart, the soul shrieking
The 'bite named disappointment, all consuming

Relentless foregoing blues, infinitely intimate

Remember!

Charming you, only me

Self destruction within unending 'why's

Remember?

Enjoining me, only you

Forsaking sanity, time moves on

Not for the better

Forsaking lull, seasons dance on

Not for the better

Endless replay

Eternal rerun

Where is the summer reprieve?

WRITTEN BY: SAIM MAROOF

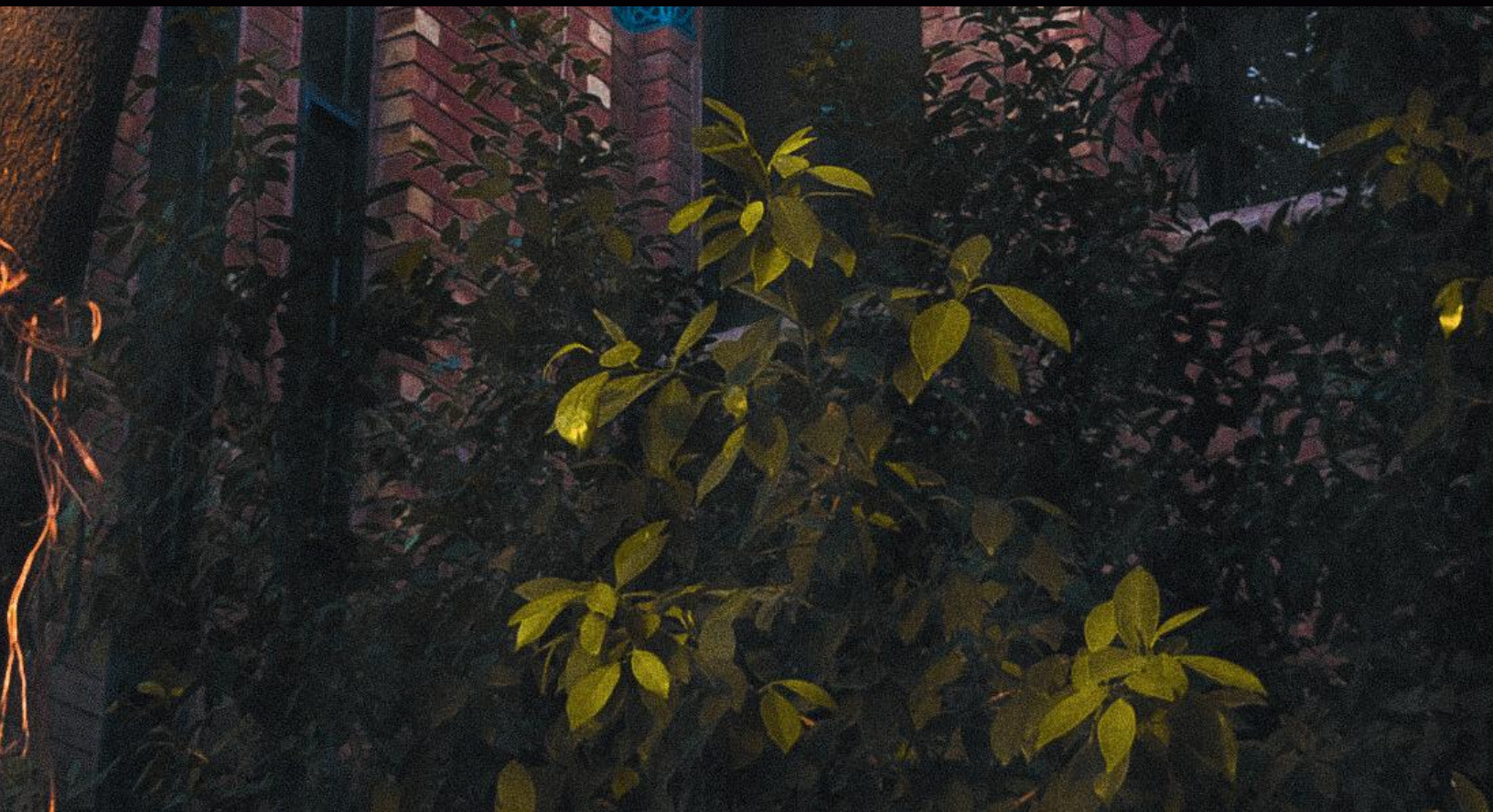


By: @akkaasii_



EVENTS

FALL '23 - SPRING '24





Event Highlights **SOFTEC** 24

In the bustling heart of Lahore, amidst the rhythmic hum of intellect and the pulsating beat of innovation, lies a sanctuary for tech enthusiasts and visionaries alike – the SoftTech Software Exhibition and Competition, affectionately known as SOFTEC. Each year, the prestigious halls of the National University of Computing and Emerging Sciences (NUCES) transform into a veritable carnival of ingenuity, where minds converge, ideas flourish, and boundaries cease to exist. This Year's SOFTEC encapsulated its mission in three words: Explore, Excel, and Empower. SOFTEC'24 had 20 Competitions and a big prize pool of PKR 1.8 Million. Main Highlights of the include the thrilling Robo Rumble, intense programming competitions, and hands-on programming workshops. These events offer participants a unique opportunity to showcase their technical prowess, collaborate with peers, and learn from industry experts. It's not merely an exhibition; it's a symphony of intellect, a celebration of the relentless pursuit of excellence. It's a melting pot of ideas, a crucible where minds collide and inspiration ignites. Here, students mingle with seasoned professionals from across the globe, exchanging insights, forging connections, and laying the groundwork for future collaborations. By fostering a collaborative environment between students and industry leaders, SOFTEC ensures that the future of Information Technology in Pakistan is both innovative and robust.



Speed Programming Competition



The ACM Student Chapter of FAST-NUCES, Lahore serves as a vibrant hub for computer science enthusiasts, providing a platform for students to explore and advance their skills in various domains of technology



One of the flagship events organized by the ACM Student Chapter is the FAST Speed Programming Competition (FSPC), which garnered significant attention and participation from students across the campus. FSPC aimed to provide a platform for students to showcase their problem-solving abilities, algorithmic prowess, and coding skills in a competitive yet conducive environment. With its emphasis on efficiency and innovation, the competition challenges participants to tackle a series of algorithmic problems within a limited timeframe, fostering critical thinking and creativity. Moreover, FSPC not only offers participants the opportunity to put their skills to the test but also provides valuable networking opportunities, allowing students to connect with like-minded peers and industry professionals.



JOB FAIR '24

Flagship Event ■ Career Counselling Society



The campus was a center of activity at FAST NUCES with anticipation and excitement as the Career Counseling Society hosted the pinnacle event of the year, Job Fair 2024. Over 100 esteemed companies participated, including renowned software houses such as Devsinc, Systems Limited, Netsol Technologies, and 10Pearls. This grand occasion marked not only a continuation of the institution's prestigious legacy but also a remarkable elevation of its standards, reflecting the tireless dedication of the faculty, as well as the students. The special guest Mr Gohar Iqbal Chaudhry, Co-founder and CEO of Johnny and Jugnu, delivered a valuable address to the students in attendance and graced the stage with his treasured guidance. Powered by Arrivy, the FYP competition picked the best three projects of near graduates for their creative and unique projects, related to medical, agriculture and commerce. A prize pool of Rs 1 lac was distributed among the winners. Lastly, the success of the event was celebrated with the team over dinner which patched up the event on a wholesome note. With each passing year, the bar is raised higher, and Job Fair '24 was no exception. Boasting an unprecedented number of participating companies, the event stood as a testament to the relentless efforts of the society and the unwavering support of the student body. Their collective commitment transformed mere plans into a resounding success.

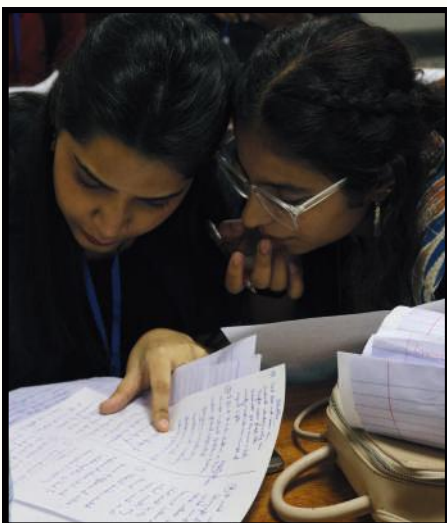


FAST DEBATING CHAMPIONSHIP 10TH EDITION



The 10th FAST Debating Championship (FDC) made a triumphant return in May 2024 after a five-year break. Held at the National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences (FAST-NUCES) Lahore Campus, this year's FDC was a resounding success, featuring fierce competition and enlightening debates. VOICE Debating Society organized this event, Renowned for its rigorous and engaging British Parliamentary (BP) format, the FDC presented teams with a variety of challenging motions. Participants were required to think on their feet and construct compelling arguments within a limited timeframe. The event included multiple rounds of debates, providing ample opportunities for teams to showcase their skills and adaptability. The championship culminated in an intense grand final, where the best teams competed for the coveted championship title.

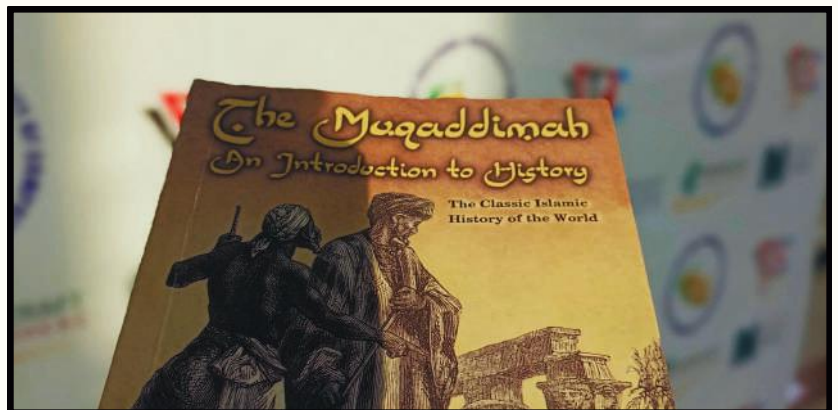
The 10th FDC attracted students from different universities across the country, creating a vibrant and competitive atmosphere. This diversity not only highlighted the broad appeal of the event but also contributed to a richer exchange of ideas and perspectives. Sponsored by Outfitters and Ahsan Enterprises, this year's event was elevated to new heights.



BOOKFAIR'24: *The 2nd Annual BookFair*



The 2nd Annual Book Fair organized by the FAST Literary Society was a resounding success, drawing over 700 enthusiastic attendees. Held on the 8th and 9th of May at the Lobby of the New Building of the National University of Computer & Emerging Sciences (FAST-NUCES), Lahore Campus, the event stood as a testament to the community's profound love for literature and learning. The fair's impressive turnout, with more than 400 students purchasing books, highlighted the deep appreciation the student body has for reading and the literary arts. From classic literature and contemporary fiction to specialized academic texts and inspiring self-help books, the selection ensured that there was something for everyone.



A significant highlight of the event was the presence of Dr. Summaira Sarfraz, the Director of FAST-NUCES Lahore Campus, who visited the stalls and interacted with the attendees. Her visit added a touch of distinction to the event and underscored the importance of such cultural and educational activities in fostering a vibrant intellectual community. Dr. Sarfraz's engagement with the students and exhibitors reinforced the university's commitment to promoting a culture of reading and continuous learning.



The Book Fair was powered by The Book Dot Com and Paper Craft Publishers, whose wide selection of books and engaging presentations significantly contributed to the event's success.

The Masked Traveller

He walked slowly,
and through the lanes, he rose
The clouds scattered,
floating over the path he chose

He met some strangers,
and with a smile, he spoke
He watched some kittens,
resting under the trees of oak

Then the rain came,
and under the sky, he soaked
With the falling drops,
some of his ardours he cloaked

He went to the sea,
and on the shore, he stayed
The breeze came to him,
with his thoughts left to fade

The flowers then bloomed,
and their fragrance known that day
The clouds flattered with-
skies blue and their essence grey

Then the night rose,
and to the stars he wished
Knowing he was lost,
he knew not, but he desist

I watched him again the other day
and he waited as long as I could see
Long I sat under the willow tree
until I realised it was no one but me

Written By: **Moosa Bin Rizwan**



I Died, You Lived.

Why does it feel like I died, and you lived?

I remember. The warmth of your leg when I was crouched down with my head against it. I remember, how you disliked any dish on the side table which was laced with the finest cloth- worried it would leave a stain. I remember, the plate, the jar of pickles, the drink, all laid out on the big tray every time you asked for it. I remember, your utter excitement when I tried on the clothes you bought for me. I remember, how you used to praise my ability to nurture knowing that maybe, it wasn't appreciated enough. I remember, how I used to pull you up by your hands because you had gotten too frail to do so.

And then, I felt it all slip from my hands. I remember, the same leg had gotten cold, the same tray rotted off the food that had stayed there all night, the excitement turned into a deadpanned expression, and no words left your mouth except mere noises....and I remember how your physical fragility transferred to me, because I could barely pick you up.

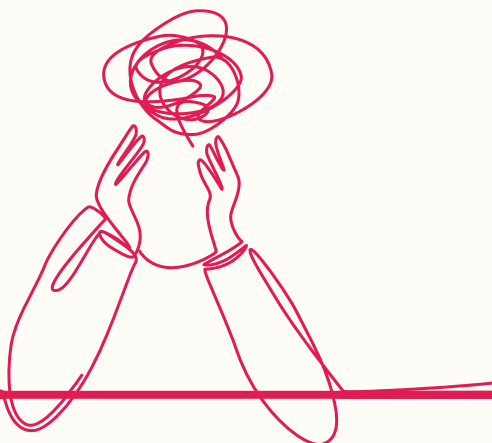
Somehow I was never quite convinced that I lived up to your praise- how you used to boast to others about my strength, my power... until I became the daughter who was the source of everyone's comfort but her own, until I laid you down on that wooden platform, until I washed you head to toe despite heavy tears falling down my eyes, and until I saw you go down in the depths of your final home.

Supposedly, it had to be me who was expected to feel contented at fulfilling the role of a daughter. It had to be me who felt like I did something good. It had to be me who was supposed to take your advice on 'living my youthful life'. It had to be me. It had to be me who lived, who remained, and yet, my heart feels colder, lifeless, so detached.

Supposedly, it had to be you who had left me, your two sons, everyone you knew. It had to be you who departed despite having quite a few years left of goodness. It had to be you, to leave three children unattended. It had to be you. It had to be you who died, who left, and yet, you are everywhere. In the prayers of people, in the twinkle of the eyes of both of my brothers, in the endless sweet words of honey that people have for you.

So why does it feel like I died, and you lived?

Written By: **S. Ahmed**



From Broken Pieces, Strength Will Grow

Within these walls, a suffocating sigh
A yearning for escape, a painted lie
The ghosts of hopes whisper in the dust
Haunted echoes of a joy long thrust

Beyond the door, a world ablaze with light
But shadows dance where darkness holds its might
Each step a crawl, a burden on my spine
Fear's icy grip, a constant, chilling line

Broken wings, unable to take flight
Disappointments echo, day and night
Success, a mirage shimmering in the sand
I chased its promise, lost the peaceful land

No shoulder offers solace, warm and true
Just empty echoes where love used to accrue
The glory's grasp, a gilded, hollow cage
Trapped in its gleam, I turn another page

A silent scream, unheard, unseen, I cry,
For the laughter lost, the dreams that used to fly.
Peace, a forgotten melody, a distant chime,
Haunts me with longing, through the sands of time

But in the depths, where shadows intertwine,
A flicker stirs, a spark, a fragile sign.
For even broken wings can learn to mend,
And shattered hearts, new strength ascend

This path, though lonely, I will choose to tread,
For in the darkness, hope can still be bred
I'll gather fragments, piece by fragile piece,
And find my solace, find my inner peace

So let the tears fall, cleansing, pure and bright,
For in their wake, a new dawn takes its flight.
And though the journey's long, and shadows creep,
I'll rise again, and find my way to sleep.

Written By: **M a h R u k h**

عہد جو مجھ سے کیے اُنکو نبھالوٹ کے آ
مستقل ہجر میں ہم کو نہ رلا لوٹ کے آ

اے سرے دل کے مسیحا مری فریاد کو سن
مجھ کو اس کرب جدائی سے بچالوٹ کے آ

خواب دیکھا ہے کہ عشاق دو مسل بیٹھے ہیں
جلد تعبیر مجھے اس کی دکھالوٹ کے آ

گھر کی دہلیز مری راہ تری تکتی ہے
منتظر ہوں میں تری بحر خدالوٹ کے آ

- واعظہ زینب



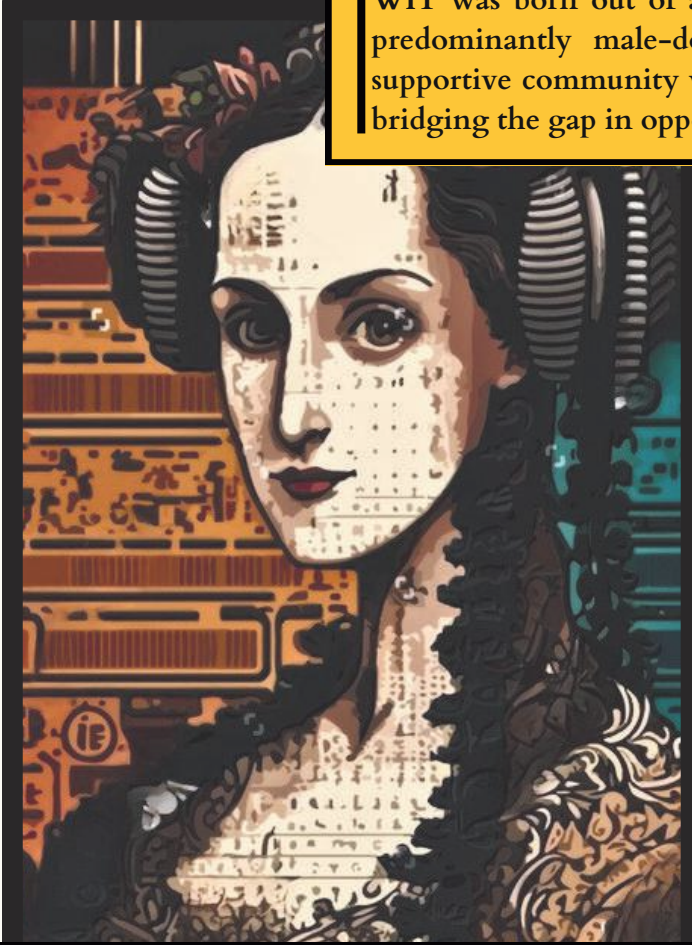


THE FUTURE IS FEMALE

Talking To Iman Nadeem (Lead - GDSC's Women In Tech)

Written By: MahRukh

WIT was born out of a need to provide a platform for women to thrive in a predominantly male-dominated STEM environment. It aimed to create a supportive community where women could network, learn, and grow together, bridging the gap in opportunities that often favour men.



The overarching vision of WIT is to empower women, encourage them to step out of their comfort zones, and provide them with opportunities that otherwise might be elusive.

Women have traditionally been marginalized in the rapidly changing field of technology, with their contributions being shadowed by those of men. It is crucial to acknowledge the important contribution that women have played in building the technological world. Throughout history, women have played a pivotal role in propelling innovation and advancement in STEM subjects, exemplified by the groundbreaking work of Ada Lovelace in computer programming and Grace Hopper in creating the first compiler. Nonetheless, structural impediments and gender stereotypes continue to impede women's progress in the technology sector. In a bid to foster inclusivity and empower women in the field of technology, the Women in Tech chapter introduced by the Google Developer Student Club (GDSC) at FAST-NUCES has been making significant strides. I had the privilege of sitting down with Iman Nadeem, an aspiring Computer Science student with a passion for Artificial Intelligence and Cognitive Science, who leads Women in Tech (WIT). Her dedication to empowering women in technology shines through as she shares insights into the inspiration behind this initiative, its impact, and its future endeavors.

There exists a symbiotic relationship between Women in Tech and GDSC with initiatives intertwined. Events like 'Python Seekho' have showcased this collaboration, demonstrating a commitment to female representation within GDSC while contributing to the broader tech workforce and thinking. Although WIT was initially focused on women, WIT is undergoing a prospective change. WIT's commitment to inclusivity is evident in its evolving nature, with plans to include men in future endeavors to promote diverse perspectives and foster a culture of equality.

Looking ahead, Women in Tech plans to host discussions with successful women in STEM fields, providing insights into their journeys and lessons learned. Networking events featuring prominent figures from various industries aim to offer valuable professional insights to members. While success stories are still emerging, individuals like Shafeeqa Iqbal, a data engineer hired by Google, serve as inspiration for aspiring women in tech who continue to achieve success in their careers. The Women in Tech chapter under GDSC is not merely a platform; it's a movement striving to dismantle barriers and pave the way for gender diversity and equality in the tech realm. Women in Tech, under the leadership of Iman Nadeem, stands as a testament to the power of inclusivity, collaboration, and empowerment in the field of technology. Through a steadfast commitment to bridging the gender gap, fostering a supportive community, and providing access to opportunities, WIT is paving the way for a more diverse and equitable tech landscape and is poised to reach greater heights, inspiring and empowering more and more women everyday.

The Inside Scoop: Why Student Run Societies Matter, Straight From A Founder's Desk

Two years ago, when I packed my bags for an unknown city, stepped into an apartment with strangers, and entered a university notorious for its pressure-cooker environment, I had one singular goal: tunnel vision on the future, avoid unnecessary distractions, and, especially, steer clear of those dreaded student societies that seemed to suck the life out of you without offering much in return. "Free ki Mazdoori hai boss", was my go-to phrase whenever society invitations came knocking. Fast forward to today, and here I am, halfway through my degree, spending half my day poring over textbooks and lectures, and the other half consumed by the thoughts of a society I never thought I'd join, let alone found. Funny how life throws curveballs when you least expect it, isn't it? However, we'll dive into the whirlwind of my adventures, experiences, and the mishaps that have shaped me into who I am today in the next issue (just kidding! Or am I?). But for now, let's focus on why and how you should unquestionably consider joining at least one society. And who knows? By the end of this discourse, I might just succeed in persuading each one of you to become a part of mine. (Truth be told, even I can't tell if I'm joking right now).

Think of societies as non-profit companies on campus. Much like these companies, they offer a structured interview process, a diverse array of departments, and, perhaps most importantly, a tight-knit community. It's akin to a series of internships, providing you with a sneak peek into the inner workings of the real industry.

Beyond the practical experience, societies offer something invaluable: **networking**. As the saying goes, *it's 50% about what you know and 50% about who you know*. The community you cultivate on campus is the same community you'll learn from, evolve with, and eventually step into the industry with. In a society, you're handed tasks. You roll up your sleeves, get stuff done, and guess what? Your work gets critiqued. Yeah, it can sting a bit—we're all human, after all. But that's how you level up! Think of societies as training grounds where blunders are seen as stepping stones, not deal breakers.



Still scared joining a society will tank your GPA? Spoiler alert: it won't. Societies, led by students, get the struggle during crunch time. They adjust their activities accordingly. Actually, being part of a society teaches you the art of balancing academics and society work like a pro.

Alright, full disclosure—I'm the brains behind FLS, and yeah, joining would be pretty rad! But hey, if that's not your vibe, scout around for a society that aligns with your interests. Our campus is a goldmine, packed with options spanning all sorts of niches. Explore until you find the one that speaks to your soul!

The bottom line? Societies are more than just clubs; they're like incubators for your potential. They provide a nurturing environment where you can sharpen your skills, forge lifelong connections, and set yourself up for success. So take the plunge, join a society, and get ready to witness the incredible transformation as you unlock new opportunities and watch yourself soar to greater heights.

The Ripple Effect

Inner Fulfillment in Serving Others

F A S T C A R E



In the ever-going race of the modern world, everyone focuses on personal success and is busy. Sometimes, even after getting worldly possessions, a person feels empty. This hollowness in our hearts is because we often overlook the impact of serving others. The feeling of fulfillment is what we crave in our lives. After getting what we ‘want’, we realize it is not what we ‘need’. A deeper sense of fulfillment, in fact, comes from extending a helping hand to those who need it. It is not about an act of kindness only, but the ripple effect it creates, touching lives far beyond our own.

There's something incredibly humbling about stepping outside of our concerns and dedicating our time and energy to serving others. Whether it is volunteering at an orphanage, tutoring a junior, or simply lending a listening ear to a friend in need, each act of kindness sends waves of positivity into the world. It's like dropping a pebble into a pond and watching as the ripples spread outward, touching everything in their path.

To paint a clear image of what the ripple effect means, consider a quiet pond with its surface as still as glass. Now, imagine that you drop a tiny pebble into it. Suddenly, the quietness of the water is disturbed by a gentle movement. The soft, circular motion gradually expands, just like a whisper spreading among friends. This is the ripple effect, and its power lies in the ability of a single act of kindness to set off a chain reaction.

The Ripple Initiates

When you lend a hand to someone, even in the smallest way, you create a ripple. It might be holding the door for someone, sharing a smile, or donating something. That initial splash—barely noticeable—sends ripples outward.

The Ripple Spreads

Kindness is like a contagious yawn; it spreads effortlessly. When you plant a tree, donate to a food drive, or comfort a child, you become a part of this ripple. Your act of goodness spreads through time, touching the hearts of hundreds of people you may never meet.

The Ripple Returns

Here's the best part: the ripple returns. By helping a struggling student, you ignite a spark that extends beyond the classroom. That student, armed with knowledge, becomes a beacon for others. The fulfillment you feel, the warmth in your chest, is the universe saying, “**You made a difference.**”

Be the pebble. Drop kindness into the pond of life. **Your ripples matter.** They merge with countless others, creating waves that touch shores far beyond our sight. In the end, isn't that why we were created? To share smiles, and make this world, a better place.



Startup Features

FAST Business Club

Lofty Dreams

Dawood Ahmad Sandhu

To develop and execute skills learned in life and university whilst providing better employment opportunities to students and fresh graduates. When me and my brother landed from a small village near Wazirabad to Lahore all we had were two suitcases one filled with our clothes and other with dreams. After completing my FSC I applied to countless companies as I was skilled in multiple things, but no company would hire a 12 pass. After some time, I realized this is exactly the gap I'm going to fill. Connecting talent to opportunities that no one gave me. We at Lofty Logics onboard students along with graduates and give them projects where they gain valuable hands-on international exposure and learn from their seniors. In the whole journey Maintaining my GPA, maintaining my friends GPA, expanding the business all while taking out time for my friends. Thank God I'm good at multitasking. I had a mature 32-year-old bringing in a decent amount of business monthly, but he lacked discipline. Coming late, leaving early was the norm. He would distract all employees and often I was a victim of his charismatic personality as well. Sometimes I felt I was working for him and not the other way around. In short, he had no sense of discipline, a free soul with no love for authority(the kind maybe our teachers think we are? The problem was him running the decorum of the office. Going against my business partner's intuition, I laid him off, after several corrective actions of course. The problem was him running the decorum of the office. Going against my business partner's intuition, I laid him off, after several corrective actions of course. And this my fellow students taught me to never **"He who would accomplish little must sacrifice little; he who would achieve much must sacrifice much; he who would attain highly must sacrifice greatly."**

Pink By B

Bushra Agha

The idea for Pink by B stemmed from a simple observation: a gap in the market for top-notch, organic products geared towards women's hormonal health. Back then, women seeking solutions for hormonal imbalances often had limited options. I saw an opportunity to empower women through natural solutions and guidance. Pink by B was born from the belief that women deserve to feel confident and in control of their well-being, and that lifestyle and dietary changes can hold immense healing power. Building trust and awareness for seed cycling was, and still is, our biggest challenge. Seed cycling is a new concept for many, and there isn't a ton of scientific research readily available to convince everyone. Couple that with the challenge of maintaining a steady supply of high-quality seeds while navigating ever-changing regulations, and you've got a recipe for sleepless nights! Looking back, one of the smartest decisions we made was starting with penetration pricing for our seed cycling kit. It allowed us to get our product into the hands of potential customers, build trust in our brand, and showcase the quality we offer. If I could go back in time, I'd tell myself to prioritize quality and brand image above all else, while always keeping our pricing competitive and our marketing strategies sharp. There wasn't a single defining moment for Pink by B. It's more like a series of milestones that marked our growth. Another turning point was the shift from penetration pricing to competitive pricing for our seed cycling kit. This move reflected our growing market share and the confidence we had built in our brand value. And of course, launching new products like Teatox and Pink Potion was a significant step forward, allowing us to cater to a wider range of needs and expand our reach.

Green N Solar

Abdul Wahab

Green-n-Solar, where innovation meets sustainability. As a premier provider in the solar industry, we specialize in a diverse range of solar solutions, including on-grid, off-grid, and hybrid systems. At Green n Solar, we're committed to harnessing the power of the sun to create a brighter, cleaner future for generations to come. Join us as we pave the way towards a greener tomorrow. The primary idea behind starting the business was to do something innovative and address the current situation of the country, such as high electricity bills and load shedding. Starting a solar business seemed both innovative and in demand. The biggest challenge was initially capturing customers for larger projects, but as understanding of the business grew, it became easier to educate and attract customers. The most valuable lesson is to give any business venture time and not lose courage. Initially, it may seem daunting, but with time, as people become familiar with the business, improvement naturally occurs. The turning point was when I dedicated my time and effort to understand the market thoroughly, gather information ,and offer competitive prices based on other solar companies' rates. This led to a significant boost in the business.

T & A Frangancia

Tallal Faisal Iqbal

T & A FRAGRANCIA is basically a perfume brand that makes the finest impressions of the imported costly perfumes with higher longevity and affordable prices. We have a line up of over 40 fragrances each made with the assurance of quality and lasting. I began with a perfume lineup due to my budget constraints, and my plan, InshaAllah, is to expand into other products like apparel as an extension. The greatest challenge

I've encountered is establishing and thriving in a highly competitive and inflationary market. Given the intense competition, I had to ensure that my pricing and brand value remained competitive compared to other brands. I recommend striking a balance between rational and irrational decision making in business. One should not rely solely on strict logic or emotional influences. Another suggestion would be to transition from avoiding risk to embracing it, as business demands patience and often involves a considerable amount of risk. Moreover, the fear of failure will not benefit one's professional endeavors in any way. I haven't encountered any do-or-die situations so far, but my business has had its share of ups and downs. However, by not losing hope and placing my trust in Allah, I have been able to enjoy the fruits of a stable business. For instance, merely to establish my presence in the perfume market, I had to resort to aggressive incentives to persuade consumers that my product was more worthy of purchase. Maintaining a break-even point was particularly challenging during that period. However, with reordering after that marketing move, my business managed to recover from any setbacks it had faced.

WAN International

Nihal Asif

Wan International embodies the essence of contemporary fashion, meticulously crafting high-quality apparel that spans the range from sleek jackets to cozy hoodies and chic tees. Our journey began with a profound passion for fashion which eventually ignited the spark to elevate our interests into a full-fledged clothing brand with the aim that it would make its mark in the industry one day. In the dynamic landscape of online business, navigating the challenges of customer satisfaction and managing

returns has been an enlightening journey. We've come to appreciate the invaluable lesson that success is a gradual process, requiring patience and dedication to cultivate. Understanding the does not come overnight we have embraced the ethos of starting slow and steadily scaling our operations, knowing that every setback is an opportunity for growth and refinement. Looking ahead, Wan International is driven by a singular ambition: to carve out a distinguished niche within the fashion industry and emerge as an esteemed brand. Our vision extends beyond mere commercial success; we aspire to democratize global fashion trends, ensuring that individuals in Pakistan have access to the latest styles and trends, empowering them to express their unique identities through clothing.

Third Eye

Muhammad

The primary idea behind Third Eye is to revolutionize automotive safety by providing enhanced visibility through advanced sensor technology inspired by deep-sea hunters like sperm whales. It offers drivers the ability to see clearly in adverse conditions such as fog, rain, and darkness, ultimately aiming to redefine the future of driving. The biggest challenge we've faced was convincing investors and industry stakeholders of the viability and uniqueness of our technology. Breaking through skepticism and gaining trust in a highly competitive market required persistence, compelling demonstrations, and a solid business strategy. The most valuable lesson learned is to stay resilient and adaptable in the face of challenges. It's essential to believe in your vision, but also be open to feedback, iterate on your ideas, and pivot when necessary. Trust your team, stay focused on your goals, and never underestimate the power of perseverance. The defining moment for our startup was when we secured our first major partnership with an automotive manufacturer.



DID YOU KNOW?

In 2005, a website called "Million Dollar Homepage"- sold individual pixels for \$1 each. They ended up making over a million dollars from this wacky idea.



CEO OF **DEVSINC**

SUCCESS STORY

Usman Asif

2000+ Employees
\$50+ Million
(Per Annum)

THE SECRET OF
A SERIAL
ENTREPRENEUR

PAKISTAN'S
FASTEST
GROWING
IT COMPANY

EMPOWERING
THROUGH
TECHNOLOGY

BUILDING A BETTER
TOMORROW FOR
PAKISTAN



Reflecting on your teenage years, could you share with us the habits you cultivated during that time that have significantly influenced your character?

Since my teenage years, one habit that I embraced wholeheartedly was perpetual learning. I firmly believe in the power of continuous education and growth. Curiosity is the driving force behind perpetual learning. It's about being eager to explore the unknown and delve into areas that may not even seem relevant at the time. However, there's a caveat to unchecked curiosity. When one becomes overly curious about everything, it can lead to a lack of focus and prevent one from achieving excellence. So it is very crucial to balance curiosity with the pursuit of excellence. Along with perpetual learning and curiosity, resilience is crucial. You put these four things together:

Excellence, Curiosity, Resilience, and Opportunity and overcome any obstacles and setbacks that come along the way.

If you hadn't pursued the path of becoming a CEO, what profession do you think you might have chosen instead?

Interestingly, the notion of becoming a CEO wasn't part of my initial plan. In fact, entrepreneurship wasn't even on my radar, especially considering my family background where business wasn't a common pursuit. My journey towards leadership stemmed from a realization of a gap in the market and a desire to address it. Being a technical person with a passion for programming, I was drawn to the idea of continually learning and innovating in the realm of technology.

However, as I delved deeper into the world of leadership and entrepreneurship, I realized the multifaceted nature of the CEO role appealed to me. It offered the opportunity to not only lead but also to explore various facets of business, from HR to recruitment and even sales. For me, regardless of the profession I might have pursued, I believe I would have ended up in a role where problem-solving and continuous learning were central.

Reflecting on your time at FAST University, how do you believe that experience has shaped who you are today, both personally and professionally?

My experience at FAST made a lot of difference in my life both in terms of my personal growth and professional development. The biggest thing though was the network I built during my time there. The connection is far more extensive than within the university building and has played an almost paramount role in different areas of my life and career. FAST is grounded in the old-school principles and with its exposure to an intense academic environment, along with the core programming skills, was instrumental in refining my technical aptitude.

Is there a surprising skill or hidden talent you possess that might not be immediately apparent?

Indeed, one skill I've developed over the years is the ability to seamlessly adapt my persona depending on the company I'm in.

Whether I'm interacting with American colleagues or delving into unfamiliar cultural nuances, I find joy in embodying different identities and connecting with people on a deeper level.

Can you recall a piece of art—a song, poem, or painting—that significantly shifted your perspective or re-energized your efforts during a challenging period?

For me, music has a sacred meaning which helped me to get through hard times and inspired me in different situations. Recalling one specific song, "Fix You" by Coldplay comes to my mind. It symbolizes the fact that if today looks bleak and hopeless, there always will be a tomorrow with countless possibilities.

What do you view as the biggest challenges the country is facing and does Devsinc plan to address these issues in the coming decade?

When we start to analyze the problems faced by Pakistan one has to be careful to find which one is the cause and which one is the symptom. Similarly, a tree with yellow leaves may show clear symptoms, but the root cause is deep inside. The main obstacle that Pakistan currently faces is its economic crisis. The nation experiences a persistent economic crisis despite receiving large aid, as the main problems are still unresolved. Another core reason for Pakistan's issues is the absence of a growth mindset. What is most disappointing is the prevailing culture of self-pity and pessimism that is an obstacle to advancement.

At Devsinc, we recognize the importance of harnessing positive energy to drive sustainable change. While profitability and maximizing our balance sheet are essential aspects of our business, we also hold strong personal values centered around contributing to the betterment of Pakistan. We echo Bob Marley's sentiment that true wealth lies not just in monetary gains but in the impact we have on society.

How did you overcome self-doubt when starting something new, and what advice would you give to others facing similar challenges?

Self-doubt is a significant challenge on the road to success, rooted in self-perception and decision-making. Overcoming it involves developing positive self-affirmation, using regret-minimization frameworks, and embracing the experience of making and owning decisions, whether right or wrong.

If you could have dinner with any fictional character, who would it be, and what burning question would you ask?

I am very sure about it and I would choose to have dinner with my father. His absence in my life has left many mysteries and unanswered questions. They say that understanding your identity requires a heart-to-heart conversation with your parents. There are often secrets and untold stories that shape who we are, but parents hesitate to share them out of fear of judgment. Unfortunately, I never had the opportunity to have that conversation with my father.



Miriam Mehdi

BBA/MBA 2010/2011

A Powerhouse in the professional World

With a trail of seven internships in her student life, Miriam has emerged as a commanding figure in the corporate realm, securing lead positions at industry titans like Shell, Uber, and CAFU. In a recent virtual interview with Team FLS, Miriam's humility was as striking as her confidence, painting a portrait of a leader who leads no We've chosen some of the most insightful questions and her provoking responses, offering you a glimpse into the mind of this remarkable leader.

Reflecting on your formative years, what factors influenced your decision to pursue a bachelor's in business administration?

I've been fortunate to have incredibly supportive parents; my mother emphasized discipline while my father encouraged extracurricular activities. However, there wasn't a strict directive guiding my path. I've always found business fascinating; observing how people collaborate, communicate, and execute tasks. This innate curiosity naturally drew me towards the field.

Can you recall any pivotal moments from your time at FAST that left a lasting impression on you and influenced your growth?

There's one particular memory that stands out vividly. During my freshman year, Dr. Summaira Sarfraz, who was the head of the department at the time, had a significant impact on me. I hadn't performed well on a quiz, and like many students, I tied my self-worth to academic success. Walking down the hallway, she stopped me, lightly pulled my ear, and said, 'Miriam, you're a smart kid, why did you mess up the quiz?' Her words resonated deeply with me. It made me realize that even as a random freshman among many students, she saw potential in me. That moment became a catalyst for me to strive for excellence.

What is a skill or talent you possess that may seem unrelated to your profession?

While not a conventional skill, I've solo travelled a lot— 15 countries to be precise. I feel like this has really finessed my ability to become an excellent planner, organize flawless trips, and embrace adventure wholeheartedly

Have you ever contemplated a career in academia?

Of course! I even had the opportunity to teach organizational behavior at FAST. It's funny how I always seem to gravitate back to it. Teaching was an incredibly refreshing experience for me. There's something truly rewarding about being a teacher, especially when you are surrounded by so many young minds that are still in their formative stages, untainted by the complexities of society.

What do you consider your greatest achievement in life?

I believe my greatest achievement is yet to come. While I've had many wonderful experiences that have shaped me into the person I am today, I'm eager to see what the future holds and what further accomplishments I can strive for.

Have you ever faced a moment that shook your confidence or left you questioning your path?

Despite my experiences, there's one chapter that was particularly tough—the transition to the US. Adapting to a new society and building relationships took time, relationships between the community over there aren't as tight as they are back home. However, I've learned that setbacks are inevitable when pursuing something different. The key is resilience—stepping out of your comfort zone, betting on yourself, and taking the leap forward.

If you could have pursued a different career, what would it have been?

Initially, I was drawn to mechanical engineering because I enjoyed deciphering the intricacies of machinery. However, if not engineering, I would have likely pursued a career in law. I've always found that I excel in interpersonal interactions and negotiation.

What advice would you offer to current students?

Be a good human. Invest in building meaningful relationships, both professionally and personally. Don't just focus on academics; engage in extracurricular activities that ignite your passion and creativity. Find something that truly makes you come alive, something you could immerse yourself in for hours. But above all, always stay grounded in your values. Opportunities and wealth may come and go, but integrity and authenticity will always be your greatest assets.

Until Next Semester . . .

