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City's Arabic univ now opens campus in Nairobi

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SURAT: The Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah—Islamic Arabic Academy, the principal educational institute of the Dawoodi Bohra community in Surat has spread its wings with opening of its biggest ever overseas campus at Nairobi in Kenya.

A second sister campus after Pakistan, the Arabic academy was inaugurated by the President of Republic of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta, in the presence of his holiness Dr Sayedna Mufaddal Saifuddin, head of the Dawoodi Bohra community recently.

The Aljamea academy, was founded as a theological university for the Dawoodi Bohras in 1814 by the 43rd Dai, Syedna Abdeali Saifuddin in

Surat.

The bedrock of Aljamea's educational focus is in its teachings based on the philosophies of the Holy Quran. This holistic view of teaching infuse a spiritual dimension into contemporaneous subjects and all knowledge, from arts and architecture to engineering, social science and medicine.

The academic programs, based on Fatimi philosophy, at the Aljamea lasts for eleven years and is divided into three stages. The final degree is considered equivalent to the Masters of Arts from Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) and recognized by Al Azhar and Cairo Universities of Egypt. The academy is also recognized by Oxford University and many other educational institutes.

The Academy has been functioning from its campus in Surat, India for over two centuries. A sister campus was inaugurated in

Karachi, Pakistan in 1983. Two subsequent campuses were initiated in Nairobi in 2011 and in Mumbai in 2013 respectively.

The campus's location in east Africa has a historical continuity. It was in north Africa, in the early 10th century, the Fatimi Imams established the Fatimi caliphate to which the Bohras trace their spiritual and cultural heritage. Presently, the Bohra community in Africa numbers over 12,000, who mostly reside in the Nairobi and coastal regions

The architecture of Aljamea campus in Nairobi, was decided through a competition for its design, which was won by a consortium of four architecture firms based in the USA.

Spread over 14 acres, the total area of all the buildings on the campus equals nearly 1,000,000 square feet and includes a mosque, Quranic institute, large ceremonial hall, dining hall and kitchen, library, auditorium, classroom buildings, administrative and maintenance facilities and separate male and female residences with a capacity of over 1,000 students.

The academy will admit students from east African countries, Egypt, USA, England, Germany and Egypt, among others.

At the inaugural speech, President of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta commended the Dawoodi Bohra Community for promoting tolerance and peace, and stated, "You are a true representation of what Islam stands for," adding, "we must work together to show that Islam is not a religion of violence but a religion of peace."

"The values in this institution, which I have had the privilege of touring, attest to your rich and diverse culture," added the President.

Addressing the inauguration ceremony, his holiness Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin said, "Our culture and education are founded upon certain principles among which are love for all people, service of humanity and kindness towards all creation. The first stipulation of our philosophy is to embrace all types of knowledge."