



THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

The President's Review

April 2026

President's Message



I write this note at a time of conflict and geopolitical challenges across many regions. I realize that many within our AKU family are directly affected or have loved ones impacted by these circumstances. Zeenat's and my thoughts are with you, and I extend our heartfelt wishes for the safety of all those caught in the midst of turmoil.

As I reflect on the uncertainty of this moment, I am reminded of the profound importance of the work we do at the Aga Khan University. As a source of healing, knowledge, opportunity and partnership, we instill hope in people's lives and demonstrate how much can be accomplished when people of different backgrounds come together to pursue shared goals. Over our 43-year journey, we have faced numerous challenges, emerging each time with strengthened resolve, heightened capability and renewed resilience.

This resilience is firmly rooted in the unwavering commitment of our faculty and staff, who demonstrate optimism despite obstacles and agility amid change, and whose dedication only grows more evident as complexities increase. I am incredibly thankful for their contributions. We are deeply grateful to our Chancellor, Pro-Chancellor and Board of Trustees for their generous support and continuous guidance. We also remain indebted to our

ardent supporters around the globe, whose generous backing has helped us to navigate these tumultuous times.

The achievements outlined below demonstrate the ongoing impact and potential of our University. Together, we will continue to build upon these achievements, no matter how the future unfolds. Let us all strive to make that future more harmonious and peaceful than the present.

Princess Zahra Installed as Pro-Chancellor



Princess Zahra Aga Khan was formally installed as AKU's Pro-Chancellor at the University's Convocation in Pakistan. "It is a privilege to be installed as the first Pro-Chancellor in the University's history," she said. "I am honoured to support the Chancellor and Board of Trustees in this role of stewardship and collaboration – working with the University's leadership to uphold its values and advance its mission."

During her visit to Kenya for AKU's Convocation, His Excellency President William Ruto conferred upon the Pro-Chancellor the Elder of the Order of the Golden Heart, one of Kenya's highest distinctions, recognising her exceptional contributions to the country's development and public service.

More than 800 students graduated at the University's Convocations in Pakistan, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, bringing the total number of degrees, diplomas and postgraduate certificates AKU has awarded to more than 22,000. In his message, AKU's Chancellor, His Highness the Aga Khan, noted that the graduates carry "both an extraordinary responsibility and an extraordinary opportunity: to create, to disseminate, and to apply knowledge in ways that improve the quality of human life." [Watch Highlights](#)

Partnership and Collaboration



AKU and Sindh Launch Nursing Partnership

Under a recently signed agreement, AKU and the Government of Sindh will collaborate on the delivery of a new Bachelor of Science in Nursing programme in Tando Muhammad Khan. The first cohort of 50 students is expected to enroll in 2027. “This collaboration marks an important step in addressing the health care access challenges in underserved districts of Sindh,” said Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho, Provincial Minister for Health and Population Welfare. [Read More](#)

AKU–Maynooth Partnership Deepens

Maynooth University President Eeva Leinonen and colleagues visited AKU’s Nairobi campus, where they engaged with AKU and AKDN leadership, including Pro-Chancellor Princess Zahra Aga Khan, to advance collaboration across research, academic exchange, and Erasmus+ mobility. The visit reinforced growing cooperation in areas including health, sustainability, and interdisciplinary research. [Read More](#)

AKU and Partners to Upgrade National Museum of Pakistan

AKU, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture and The Citizens Archive of Pakistan will collaborate with the federal National Heritage and Culture Division to enhance the National Museum of Pakistan’s galleries, educational programming and library. Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Aurangzeb Khan Khichi called the partnership “a transformative step” for the museum. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

University of Michigan Partnership Renewed

AKU renewed its institutional agreement with the University of Michigan, reinforcing a long-standing strategic partnership spanning data science, global health, ageing research, oncology, and AI-enabled diagnostics. The collaboration continues to generate significant externally funded research and supports joint training, faculty exchange and doctoral pathways.

Western University Agreement Expands Collaboration

AKU signed a new agreement with Western University (Canada), opening new avenues for collaboration in interdisciplinary research, health innovation and policy engagement. By bringing together complementary strengths in global health and data-informed decision-making, the partnership supports joint research, academic exchange and training initiatives.

Media School and Nation Media to Collaborate in Uganda

The Graduate School of Media and Communications and the Nation Media Group Uganda signed a memorandum of understanding to strengthen collaboration, support applied research, provide placement opportunities for students and promote media viability. [Read More](#)

Research and Innovation



A Record Year for Research

In 2025, AKU faculty published more than 1,800 scholarly papers and attracted more than \$100 million in research funding from institutions around the world. AKU research was also cited nearly 88,000 times last year. All three figures are records for the University.

Researchers Address Mental Health Among Young Kenyans

Researchers at the Institute for Human Development will conduct a randomized controlled trial to assess a school-based programme that aims to improve mental health among Kenyan adolescents. More than 20 percent of Kenyan adolescents reported depression symptoms in a recent study.

[Read More](#)

Major Long-Term Study Targets Heart Disease in Pakistan

An AKU-led study that is the first of its kind in Pakistan will follow thousands of adolescents and adults over at least a decade to illuminate the sources of heart disease, kidney disease and metabolic conditions. [Read More](#)

Clinical Trials Unit Earns WHO Recognition

The Clinical Trials Unit in Pakistan was designated a World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Clinical Trials, becoming the first institution to earn such status in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, which encompasses 22 countries and territories. The Unit will work with the WHO to strengthen capacity, support multi-centre studies and set global standards. [Read More](#)

Paving the Way for Maternal Vaccines

The Centre of Excellence in Women and Child Health hosted a consortium of national and international immunization stakeholders in Kenya to prepare for future trials of vaccines against Group B Streptococcus. The bacteria causes an estimated 150,000 stillbirths and infant deaths each year. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

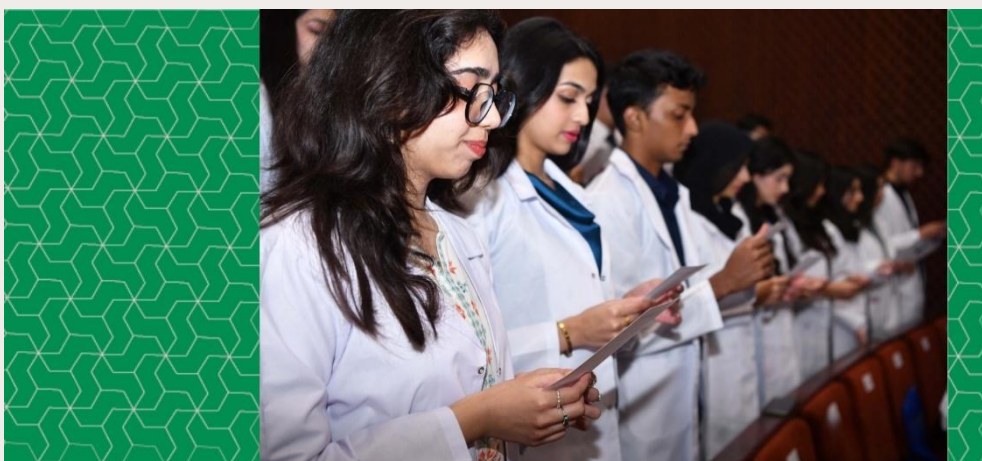
AI Project Targets Respiratory Health

In Tanzania, the School of Nursing and Midwifery officially launched its project to diagnose respiratory conditions by analyzing cough audio with artificial intelligence. The study bring together AKU, Muhimbili University and the University of Warwick in the UK. [Read More](#)

New Guidelines Stress Early Intervention for High Cholesterol

Influential new guidelines on the management of dyslipidemia from the American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association were co-authored by AKU Vice Provost for Research Salim Virani. The guidelines emphasize early risk assessment, personalized treatment and combining lifestyle measures with appropriate therapy. [Read More](#)

Achieving Excellence



In a First for South Asia, AKUH Earns New JCI Certifications

The Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH), Pakistan, has achieved Joint Commission International (JCI) Clinical Care Programme Certification (CCPC) for its Cataract and Coronary Artery Bypass Grafting (CABG)

programmes. With these certifications, AKUH becomes the second hospital in the world to be certified under JCI-CCPC standards for cataract care, and one of only three hospitals globally to achieve this distinction for CABG. The Aga Khan University Hospital, Nairobi, also holds JCI Clinical Care Programme Certifications for the management of heart attacks and primary stroke. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

Surgical Training Programme Accredited

In Nairobi, the residency training programme in surgery became the first surgical training programme in the region to be accredited by the U.S.-based Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education International. All of AKU's residency programmes in Kenya are now accredited by the Council. [Read More](#)

FMIC Launches Afghanistan's First Neurology PGME Programme

Responding to urgent clinical needs, FMIC launched a Postgraduate Medical Education (PGME) programme in neurology. The hospital now offers 10 residency programmes, and plans to add others in fields such as intensive care. FMIC remains the only hospital in Afghanistan to offer PGME programmes in cardiac surgery, cardiology, pathology and radiology.

Medical Graduates Can Now Practice in Singapore

In a landmark decision, Singapore officials added AKU's Medical College, Pakistan to the country's list of recognized overseas medical schools. The recognition makes graduates eligible to apply for medical registration in Singapore and demonstrates confidence in the quality of the education the Medical College provides. [Read More](#)

Aga Khan Hospital, Dar es Salaam Receives Service Excellence Award

For the second consecutive year, the Aga Khan Hospital, Dar es Salaam secured the Service Excellence Award in the Health Sector category. Presented at an event organised by the Chartered Institute of Customer Management, the award recognizes the hospital's outstanding service delivery and customer care. [Read More](#)

Research Office Recognized for Excellence in Grant Management

The Research Office in Pakistan was awarded Good Financial Grant Practice Gold Tier Certification, making it one of two organizations in Asia to achieve gold or platinum certification. Last year, the Research Office in Kenya received platinum certification. [Read More](#)

New Multidisciplinary Lecture Series Inaugurated

The Faculty of Arts and Sciences kicked off Fieldnotes, a public lecture and discussion series focused on issues in the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. The first installment featured historian Amanda Lanzillo of the University of Chicago, who discussed the India-Afghanistan Hijrat of 1920. [Read More](#)

Prioritizing the Environment



Study Highlights Arusha Field School Success

A new study highlights the success of the international field school at AKU's Arusha Climate and Environmental Research Centre, which brought students from Simon Fraser University in Canada to the Centre for a month-long learning experience. [Read More](#)

Solar Projects Reduce Reliance on Fossil Fuels

In the last year, AKU has installed a total of 4.7 megawatts of solar power at its campuses in Karachi, Nairobi and Kabul. That will prevent roughly 2,000 tonnes of carbon emissions annually, the equivalent of removing more than 900 cars from the road. More solar power will be added this year, further reducing AKU's reliance on fossil fuels.

Addressing Water Shortages in Northern Punjab

A year-long initiative in Murree District improved water, sanitation and hygiene awareness while promoting rooftop rainwater harvesting as a climate-resilient solution to chronic water shortages. The project is a collaboration of the Institute for Educational Development, NED University and the Urban Unit, funded by the Government of Punjab. [Read More](#)

Study Urges Multi-Sector Approach to Climate Resilience

The Institute for Global Health and Development conducted a one-year study of vulnerability to climate change in five high-risk districts across Pakistan. It concluded that an integrated approach combining infrastructure investment, participatory governance and other initiatives is urgently needed. [Read More](#)

Helping Health Facilities to Survive Climate Change

AKU's Institute for Global Health and Development launched a research initiative aimed at developing architectural and policy guidelines that help

health facilities to operate effectively amid climate shocks such as heatwaves and floods. [Read More](#)

Enhancing Health Care



FMIC Patient Volume Hits Record

FMIC in Kabul cared for a record-high 253,000 patients in 2025, bringing the total number of patients it has cared for since its founding in 2006 to more than 2.6 million. Earlier this year, FMIC was named 'Hospital of the Year' at the Healthcare Asia Awards 2026, recognising its exceptional service and lasting impact in the communities it serves. This momentum continues as the institution marks its twentieth anniversary this April.

Advanced Cancer-Fighting Technology Comes to Kenya

The Aga Khan University Hospital, Nairobi is now treating cancer patients with the TrueBeam Radiotherapy System. The most advanced technology of its kind in Kenya, it enables clinicians to target tumours with extraordinary precision. [Read More](#)

Leadless Pacemaker Implanted, a First for the Region

Specialists at the Aga Khan University Hospital, Nairobi became the first in Sub-Saharan Africa to implant a leadless pacemaker. The procedure makes it possible to safely implant pacemakers in patients with blocked veins and other issues. [Read More](#)

AKU to Host World Health Summit Regional Meeting 2026

Later this month, AKU will convene over 2,000 global leaders for the World Health Summit Regional Meeting 2026 at the United Nations Office in Nairobi. Senior government officials, policymakers, innovators, researchers, academics and changemakers will gather to address Africa's pressing health challenges and explore solutions that strengthen Africa's health systems and advance global health progress. Presiding over the meeting will be Professor Lukoye Atwoli, Dean of AKU's Medical College, East

Africa, and the WHS International President for 2026. Co-conveners of the meeting include Kenya's Ministry of Health, the World Health Organization and Africa CDC. [Read More](#)

Helping Children with Cancer to Continue Learning

The Oncology Department in Karachi launched an in-hospital tutoring programme that enables children undergoing cancer treatment to continue their education. The project was developed in collaboration with Umeed Par and The Dawood Foundation. [Read More](#)

Boosting Critical Care in Kenya and Tanzania

The Tele-ICU Project at the Aga Khan University Hospital, Karachi has expanded its reach to Kenya and Tanzania, enabling physicians at Aga Khan Health Services facilities to receive timely guidance on managing critically ill patients. More than 250 patients in the two countries have been helped so far. In total, the Tele-ICU Project has assisted nearly 3,200 patients in Pakistan, Afghanistan and East Africa.

The Impact of Giving



Expanding Access to Care

Our Patient Welfare Programmes in Pakistan, Kenya, and Afghanistan continue to expand their reach, enabling a growing number of patients in our health care system to receive quality care. These patients benefit from comprehensive clinical, diagnostic and laboratory services, including life-saving surgical procedures. For a closer look at the difference we make in patients' lives, explore our 2025 Pakistan Impact Report [here](#).

Connecting Talent with Opportunity

In 2025, more than 70% of AKU students received full or partial scholarships and financial assistance, gaining access to a transformative education across our campuses in Pakistan, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and the UK. We are deeply grateful to our donors for partnering with us to make these

life-changing opportunities possible. Discover the impact of student support in our 2025 Scholarship and Financial Assistance Report [here](#).

Alumni Give Back

The MBBS Class of 2000 established a \$115,000 scholarship endowment in memory of their late classmate Mohsin Abro. [Read More](#)

Building Capacity



Advancing Child Development in Tanzania

Twenty-nine individuals from organizations across Tanzania completed a one-week seminar in the science of early childhood development conducted by the Institute for Human Development and the Institute for Educational Development. A dollar invested in early childhood programmes can yield benefits of up to \$13. [Read More](#)

Agreement to Strengthen Palliative Care

AKU faculty will train staff at Rahat Kada Hospice in Karachi in palliative care, and AKU students and residents will undertake rotations at the hospice, under a new agreement between the two institutions. In addition, the agreement will enable financially challenged AKUH patients to receive end-of-life care at Rahat Kada at no cost. [Read More](#)

A New Level of Fidelity in Patient Simulation

The Centre for Innovation in Medical Education in Pakistan acquired a HAL S5301, the most advanced patient simulator in the world. See it demonstrate some of its extensive capabilities [here](#).

Individual Honours and Awards



Faculty, staff and alumni continue to receive prestigious honours and awards around the world. [Bahadur Ali](#) (MEd '99) was named Interim Education Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan. Dean [Farid Panjwani](#) was appointed to the National Curriculum Advisory Committee in Pakistan. Assistant Professor [Saleema Begum](#) was appointed an International Surgical Ambassador by the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh. For a complete list of honorees click [here](#).

Did You See?



The Clinical Research Unit in Nairobi has helped hundreds of cancer patients from across Kenya and beyond over the last five years. Discover the impact it has had in this short [video](#).

Did You Know?



Season 4 of [Voices from the Roof of the World](#), an award-winning documentary series on the impact of climate change across Central and South Asia, is nearing completion. VRW films continue to be featured in international film festivals around the world, showcasing their creative excellence on the global stage.



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