

**SPECIAL
EDITION**

PUNJANI CHARITABLE TRUST (T)

The ADLC MAGAZINE

ADVANCED DIGITAL LITERACY CENTER



KHOJA
Leadership Forum
Philanthropic Leadership for Humanity

“A remarkable milestone: A life of leadership, legacy, and lasting impact”



Celebrating the 94th Birthday of Mr. Punjani.

We are honored to celebrate the 94th birthday of Mr. Punjani—a visionary whose generosity continues to shape lives and inspire communities. This milestone is not only a celebration of a long and remarkable life, but also a tribute to a heart that gives endlessly. Over the past three years, his unwavering support has been instrumental in helping us achieve significant milestones in education, training, and community development. We are deeply grateful for his commitment and the impact he has made through his contributions. On this special occasion, we extend our heartfelt prayers and warm wishes for his continued health, happiness, and longevity—so that his legacy may live on and continue to uplift generations to come.

GRAND OPENING CEREMONY OF THE BILAL SECONDARY SCHOOL & IT CENTER OF EXCELLENCE ON THE 3RD FLOOR IN KAMPALA, UGANDA.



The opening ceremony was graced by His Excellency Republic of Iran Ambassador Dr. Majid Saffar, the Mayor of Kampala Mr. Salim Uhuru, Representative of the Ministry of Education and Sports Mr. Mu-teekanga George, Africa Federation Chairman Alhaj Amine Nassor, AFED Vice Chairman Alhaj Aunali Khalfan, AFED Trustee Alhaj Shabir Najafi



The Punjani Charitable Trust of Toronto, Canada generously donated the full cost of the construction of the school building,.....



Saturday April 12, 2025, marked a significant occasion in the history of the Khoja Shia Ithnasheri Jamaat of Kampala, Uganda, with the grand opening of the Bilal Secondary School. The opening ceremony was graced by His Excellency Republic of Iran Ambassador Dr. Majid Saffar, the Mayor of Kampala Mr. Salim Uhuru, Representative of the Ministry of Education and Sports Mr. Muteekanga George, Africa Federation Chairman Alhaj Amine Nassor, AFED Vice Chairman Alhaj Aunali Khalfan, AFED Trustee Alhaj Shabir Najafi, AFED Housing Board Chairman Alhaj Akil Hirji and CBB Chairman Alhaj Mohamed Hemani. The Punjani Charitable Trust of Toronto, Canada generously donated the full cost of the construction of the school building, including the furniture had travelled all the way from Canada to bless the opening ceremony.

The highlight of the occasion was the humble presence of Alhaj Murabbi Mohammed Hussain bhai Punjani, the 94-year-old founder of the Punjani Charitable Trust, who expressed his excitement and joy at being in Kampala to witness his home Jamaat make such an amazing progress. The Punjani Charitable Trust members Alhaj Salim bhai Punjani, Alhaj Shafiq bhai Punjani, Alhaj Gulam bhai Punjani, Mrs. Fatima Shafiq Punjani and Chairperson Dr Riyaz Hassanali were also present to witness the grand ceremony. The Opening Ceremony was also witnessed by various leaders from other communities such as Aga Khan Ismaili Chairperson, Mukhi and the Aga Khan Custodian Board Chairman for East Africa Mr. Mohammed Dewji, Dawoodi Bohora Chairman, Indian 1 Association leaders, Pakistan Association Trustees and Office Bearers and Indian Business Forum Chairman.

Also present were the members of Kampala Jamaat Board of Trustees, Executive Committee and the members of the Jamaat. The Bilal Board of Directors had specially invited the parents, teachers and students to witness the milestone in the history of the Education sector of the Jamaat.





Speech by Mohamedhussein Punjani: Bilal School Opening, Kampala - 12th April, 2025

Community Leaders of Africa Federation, Kampala Jamaat, & Bilal School, Honorable Guests, - Salaamun Alaikum! My name is Mohamed Hussein Punjani, Chairman of Punjani Foundation in Canada. I've travelled many miles across the ocean to be here today and feel honoured & privileged that Allah has given me the strength and courage to join you all in person for the opening ceremony of this wonderful school building. Returning here today to my birth country brings back many emotional memories from about 60 years ago, when we opened a health clinic in this very compound. I remember recording that moment on video, the first of its kind at that time. That clinic was built by my close friend, Marhoom Habib Bhai Walji, truly a man of God! This building, having undergone a change of use, still stands, benefitting and serving our community till today. Habib Bhai was my mentor and role model

when I moved from Bukoba to Kampala in the 1960s. We worked together for the community for many years, even when we moved to London, collecting funds door to door - where we opened our first mosque in Hammersmith.

Today, I also remember and miss past respected leaders like Ebrahim Bhai Kassam, Mulla Nanji, and Habib Kara, who all gave back to our community & with whom I had close ties. May Allah bless them all. I thank you all for allowing us the opportunity to help build this secondary school. I'm also pleased to confirm our pledge to fully furnish the school. With the blessing of your Education Board, we are also planning to set up and equip a modern computer and IT center within this building much like we have done through our NGO in Tanzania. Our Board has passed the chairmanship of our NGO in Tanzania to Dr. Riyaz Hassanali who will Insha'Allah work closely with our foundation to expand our educational programs throughout Africa - with his vision of modern education using technology to benefit the youths. We want our young people to learn, grow, and do well in life. Nothing makes me happier and prouder than seeing our students succeed - so that they can go on to help their families and eventually give back to their communities. Helping others has always been part of our family values. I pray that my children and grandchildren will continue this legacy of good work even when I am not there. We shall always support the cause of the most needy and underprivileged in society, especially orphans & education. Special thanks go to the esteemed leadership of our Kampala Jamaat under Shabbar Virani, Bilal Academy under Mustafa Kanji and the Building Committee under Sibtain Merchant and all who have worked tirelessly to help complete this project in record time of 6 months! I would also like to recognise the support of the Africa Federation, under the chairmanship of Amine Nassor, Vice Chairman Aunali Khalfan, Housing Development Board Chairman Akil Hirji and overall guidance of past Chairman & Trustee Shabir Najafi, in making this project a reality. Thank you all for welcoming me and my family with so much love and respect and making us part of your family here in Uganda!



**Speech by Dr. Riyaz Hassanali
Chairman Punjani Charitable Trust Tanzania**

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim.

*Distinguished guests, community elders, brothers and sisters,
Salaamun Alaikum.*

*Today, we come together to celebrate something truly special –
the opening of a school that not only represents bricks and mortar,
but vision, heart, and legacy.*

*This school is being established in honor of the Punjani charitable
trust, led by none other than Mohamed Hussein Punjani – a man
whose life story reflects entrepreneurship, foresight, and extraordinary.*

*Throughout his career as a successful businessman, Mohamedbhai supported countless initiatives for
the betterment of our Khoja community. But what makes today even more meaningful is what he has
come to realize in recent years: that legacy is not just about recognition, but about inspiring others –
especially his own children and grandchildren – to use their wealth and talent for the greater good.
Three years ago, I recognized that the world was on the verge of something monumental – a transfor-
mation unlike anything before:*

The Fourth Industrial Revolution.

*While most of the world was still reeling from COVID-19, few understood what was already unfolding.
The rise of artificial intelligence, robotics, data science, and automation would soon change every-
thing – especially in underdeveloped nations that lacked access to tools and knowledge to prepare.
One evening, I sat down with Mohamedbhai to share this concern.*

I told him:

“This change is coming fast – and our community may be left behind if we don’t act now.”

Without hesitation, he looked at me and said:

“What will it take to make this knowledge accessible?”

That very night, he opened his heart – and his checkbook – and said,

“Let’s start now.”

*But it wasn’t just him. It required full support from his children: Salim, Fatim, Gulam, Shafiq, and Minaz.
Together, they embraced this bold vision, and from that unity, the first school was born.*

*We were also blessed to meet Mirjean Pirbhai, who helped transform the dream into a structured insti-
tution – one that could deliver not only education, but excellence.*

*Today, we offer courses in AI, data science, cybersecurity, and other essential fields that are shaping
the future.*

*We made this bold move because we saw those traditional professions – law, finance, even medicine
– will be transformed by AI.*

*I am also pleased to share the outcomes of the 4th Cybersecurity Forum organized two days back by
the ICT Commission Tanzania where PCTT attended as invitee. The forum highlighted the urgent need
to enhance capacity building and for the ICT Commission to engage, promote, invite investors in the
area of cybersecurity and support start up project for young entrepreneurs.*

*We have made significant strides with the Punjani project, connecting with key stakeholders such as
Digital4Tanzania, a Twinning Project between Finland and Tanzania, fully funded by the EU. This project
aims to train Tanzanians on cybersecurity, data protection, and enhancing the digital economy. The
project will be delivered under the ICT Commission within the Incubation hub that Punjani will be
taking part under an MoU.*

*Furthermore, we connected with TZ-CERT (Tanzania Computer Emergency Response Team), which
has been instrumental in strengthening Tanzania's cybersecurity backbone. TZ-CERT's excellence has
earned Tanzania the second place in Africa in the Global Cybersecurity.*

*We are proud to say that over 1000 students have already been trained through this initiative. A drone
assembly plant and services project are being studied, with partners from India, the US, and Taiwan.*

This project aims to transform agriculture and border surveillance in Africa, creating jobs in drone piloting, AI software development, hardware repairs, and support.

But we are also disappointed that very few were from our own Khoja community.

The numbers don't lie:

Over 300 million jobs are expected to be replaced by AI and robotics.

This is not fearmongering. This is fact.

So today, I ask our leaders, our elders, our parents:

Let us not wait. Let us act now.

The change is not coming in decades. It is coming in the next five years.

This new school in Kampala is not just a gift – it's an opportunity.

An opportunity to prepare our children, and even our adults, for the future.

An opportunity made possible by the Punjani Family Foundation – but it will only be successful if we use it.

Let's come together and fulfill the dream of Mohamedbhai – a dream to see our community not just survive, but thrive in the world ahead.

May our children and grandchildren speak of this day with pride,

Just as we speak of the sacrifices made by those who came before us.

Thank you for listening.

And Insha'Allah, I look forward to returning here one day

To see a thriving center of excellence – a new source of pride for our community.

Wassalam



UNFOLDING THE DAYS CELEBRATIONS



Kampala Jamaat bestowed their highest recognition of Imam Ali ('A) award to Alhaj Murabbi Mohammed Hussain bhai Punjani for having dedicated his entire life in community work especially during the repossession of the Jamaat properties in Uganda. He was also appreciated for his generous contribution towards the Punjani Charitable Trust Building - Bilal School Secondary Section. The citation was read out by Africa Federation Trustee Alhaj Shabir Najafi elaborating the enormous career of Alhaj Murabbi Mohammed Hussain bhai Punjani and the noble works being carried on by his children and board members.



This remarkable celebration marked not only the opening of a school but the beginning of a new chapter in educational excellence for the Kampala Jamaat. As the doors of Bilal Secondary School open, so too does a future filled with promise and opportunity. May this spirit of unity, generosity, and progress continue to flourish for generations to come.