

# Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah of Dawoodi Bohra community

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**In news**-The Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the campus of the Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah , an Arabic academy of the community recently.

## **About the campus-**

- **Also known as Jamea, this is an academic institute exclusively catering to the education of young boys and girls** from the Dawoodi Bohra community, a Shiite denomination spread across the world.
- While the **academy's focus will primarily be on spiritual and religious studies**, the academy will also provide its students with mainstream education in association with an internationally recognised school board curriculum.
- The Mumbai campus is spread around 850,000 sq ft in Andheri's Marol and is the second such campus in India.
- **The first one was established over two centuries ago in 1810 in Surat**, a town which is the home to a large Bohra population.
- The new campus boasts of magnificent white marble structures, with colourful designs engraved in different colours.
- It has huge corridors, ceremonial halls decorated with beautiful chandeliers, and a multilevel landscaped courtyard housing a minaret surrounded by a series of fountains and water bodies indicating flow of knowledge.
- The Mumbai campus also has separate hostels for boys and girls, faculty residences, a multi-storey administration and classroom building, a library, dining halls, prayer halls and a building dedicated to teaching of Holy Quran.
- The prayer area is inspired by the al-Jāmi' al-Azhar in

Cairo, the original location of the Al Azhar University, one of the oldest extant universities in the world.

- **Globally this will be the fourth campus of the Jamea after Surat (1810), Karachi (1983) and Nairobi (2017).**

### The Dawoodi Bohra community-

- **The Dawoodi Bohras are Shia Muslims whose leader is known as the Al-Dai-Al-Mutlaq.** A
- According to members of the community, there are around 1 million Dawoodi Bohras spread around the world.
- Their **largest numbers reside in India, Pakistan, Yemen, East Africa, and the Middle East**, with a growing presence across Europe, North America, South East Asia, and Australia.
- They are **known to be a close-knit community who, like all Muslims, follow the tenets of Islam**; namely reciting the Quran, observing the five daily prayers, fasting during the month of Ramadan, performing the pilgrimages of Hajj and Umrah and offering Zakat.
- Whilst adherence to traditional values is important for the community, **they are also known for their mercantilism and having a modernist approach to their lifestyles.**
- **The cultural heritage of this denomination is found in the traditions of the Fatimid Imams; direct descendants of the Islamic prophet Muhammad through his daughter Fatima.**
- The Fatimids ruled over North Africa between 10th and 11th century CE.
- Mostly self-reliant, the **Bohras are typically traders, businesspersons, and entrepreneurs.** The word "Bohra", in fact, comes from the Gujarati word vohrvu or vyavahar, meaning "to trade".
- For over 400 years, the leader of the community has been based in India, including the current and the 53rd leader, His Holiness Dr Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin.

- The leader of the community is recognised by the members as having the right to excommunicate its members.
- In practical terms, excommunication means not being allowed to access a mosque belonging to the community or a burial dedicated to the community.
- Among the members of the community who have faced excommunication in the past are those who contested the headship of the leaders.