

# Aga Khan Academy to enter final phase, with construction begins this year

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With an aim to inaugurate by 2020, the construction work of the Aga Khan Academy is going to start by this year, the Aga Khan Development Network or AKDN says.

The Academy in Dhaka will eventually be part of a network of 18 centres of educational excellence in a total of 14 countries across Africa, Central and South Asia and the Middle East.

The Aga Khan laid a foundation stone for Bangladesh's first Aga Khan Academy on May 20, 2008, during his Dhaka visit.

The schools will use the International Baccalaureate curriculum and admit students on the basis of their academic potential rather than their ability to pay.

Located on a 20-acre plot in Bashundhara, Dhaka, the Aga Khan Academy will initially enrol 750 students in K-12 classes. It eventually plans to expand to 1,200 at peak capacity.

The AKDN said they informed their plan to start the construction work to the government on Tuesday in a meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

A delegation met Foreign Secretary Md Shahidul Haque and Secondary and Higher Education Secretary Sohorab Hossain on Tuesday.



The Foreign Secretary hoped that the establishment of Aga Khan Academy in Dhaka would promote international standard education among the students.

The AKDN said it is also aligned with the Prime Minister's Vision-2021 and Vision-2041 whereby Bangladesh will be a middle-income country and a developed country, respectively.

“A strong education sector will be a very important requirement in this regard.”

The academy will provide residential facilities to the students and staff to enable their full participation to create a diverse learning community.

The academy is to provide exceptional students with an outstanding education to prepare them for leadership roles in Bangladesh and abroad.

Students are selected based on merit regardless of their socio-economic background, gender, race or religion.

“Selection on merit ensures that talented students from all sectors of Bangladeshi society can have access to a world-class education.”

The AKDN Resident Diplomatic Representative for Bangladesh, Munir Merali, in a statement said the Academy project represents a “significant strategic” investment by the Network in the education sector to help cultivate the next generation of thinkers, scientists and scholars capable of contributing to the social and economic development of Bangladesh.

Salim Bhatia, Director of the Academies project, explained that the not-for-profit Academy is part of an integrated network of schools located across 14 countries, following in the successful footsteps of Mombasa (Kenya), Hyderabad (India) and Maputo (Mozambique).

It is also part of a wider global AKDN education network offering education from early childhood through to tertiary and continuing education.

The AKDN also hosted a reception Tuesday night in honour of the visiting delegation that was attended by members of the diplomatic corps, heads of development agencies, members of civil society and the business community.