



Photo Credit: Asif Hassan/AFP via Getty Images

Karachi is a confluence of diverse cultures and ethnicities. The picture illustrates a Sheedi ritual at a hot spring near Saint Manghopir's shrine. Brought originally as slaves from Africa, the community venerates crocodiles they believe emerged from the lice of the Saint's spiritual master, Baba Fareed. Amid dances and chants in a mix of Balochi, Sindhi, Urdu, and Swahili, crocodiles adorned with Sindur (red pigment) and rose garlands are offered the meat of a sacrificial goat.

Foreword by Farhat Moazam*

From Krokola, Kalati Bunder, Kurrachee to Modern Day Karachi

"The past is never dead; it's not even past."
William Faulkner, American writer (d. 1962)

The primary theme of the December 2025 edition of CBEC's biannual newsletter is the city of Karachi. Situated on the Arabian Coast, a port known to the ancient Greeks as Krokola, it has undergone innumerable stages of metamorphosis (including in its name) to what it is today; Karachi, a bustling megapolis of 20 million people, a microcosm of culturally and ethnically diverse Pakistan.

The history of Karachi, the provincial capital of Sindh, spans many centuries. Its heritage is rich - varied peoples that have called it home, a place where diverse cultures, religions, and languages melded, the site of manifold architectural styles still discernible in its buildings and cemeteries. It is a city believed to be protected from cyclones by Sufi saint Abdullah Shah Ghazi who lived here (8th century CE), and whose spirit supposedly resides in his shrine that faces the Arabian Sea.

Our newsletter features essays and photographs highlighting some aspects of the multifaceted heritage that have left indelible marks on the city of Karachi. We hope you will enjoy getting to know the city of the Centre of Biomedical Ethics and Culture, SIUT.

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WHISPERS BENEATH THE SAND

Durriya Kazi*

Much like the waves of Karachi's coastline – sometimes overwhelmed by Monsoon seas and sometimes stretched out alongside winter's gentle ripple, the stories of this city appear and disappear with few traces.

Who were the community of people whose flint tools from 2 million years ago were found on Mulri Hills opposite the University of Karachi, now buried under an apartment block? Why were stone megaliths erected in circles on the outskirts of Karachi? And more importantly, how have they survived for so long?

Why was such a harbor so perfectly sheltered from the Arabian Sea by the Manora peninsula, not a thriving seaport in ancient times? Or was it? Mentions of what is today Karachi go back to at least the 3rd century BC, Krokola, Monrontobara, Kharacchi, Rasal Karazi, Kaurashi, Karachar, Kalaiti Bunder, Ramaia, Kolachi, Kurrachee. But tantalizingly, no more than names remain, except for the famous story of the seven sons of Aubhayo, six of whom were caught in a whirlpool off Clifton called *Kulachi jo* and swallowed by a whale. The remaining son, who was disabled, had a metal cage designed, lowering himself into the whirlpool where he not only killed the whale but removed the bodies of his brothers from its belly. The graves still exist at the busy crossing of *Gulbai* (or *Kul Bhai*), once surrounded by lofty date palms that were removed by an aesthetically challenged city official.

The first written account of the establishment of Karachi is found in the memoirs of Seth Naomal Hotchand, the great-grandson of a Hindu trader Seth Bhojomal. Bhojomal moved a group of traders to Karachi in 1729, after the port, *Karak Bandar*, on the far side of the Hub River, silted up, making it difficult for trading boats to navigate to and from Muscat and Iran. Just 25km away lay the perfect port of Karachi, naturally protected by deep mangroves, and with access to the Arabian Sea. However, the new town was walled into a protected mud fort, mounted with guns, suggesting there was a need for protection. But from whom?

Local tribes seem to have taken an interest in Karachi's fortunes only after the town was established in the mid-18th century. However, the area has been at the edge of regional adventurism since at least 500 BC, coming into the sway of the Achaemenid Empire, Alexander's expeditions, Maurya,

Indo-Greek, Scythian, Parthian, Kushan, Sassanian, the Khilafats of the Umayyad, and Abbasids, Dynasties of Tahiri, Saffarid, Ghaznavi, Ghori, Safavid, Mughal, and in between the sweep of Mongol invasions. Little is known of the impact on what is now Karachi. But one can exercise poetic license and imagine emissaries, tax collectors, and the rumble of discontent.

This fugitive history had little meaning for the East India Company, which by the time they arrived in Sindh, had already annexed large parts of India from Calcutta westwards. Having embarked on the disastrous attempt to control Afghanistan, to prevent the expansion of Russia, they lost face, emptied the coffers, and were nervous of consequential rebellions inside India. Enter Sir Charles Napier.

History remembers him as the conqueror of Sindh. We learn more about Charles Napier, the man, from letters to his mother. A soldier's soldier, who had no desire for war, he was nevertheless an unflinching strategist, a problem solver. If that required war, he would not shy away from it. A veteran of Napoleonic and American wars, he said, "War is natural to me, but I love it not. I hate to destroy."

Highly critical of the incompetence of his employers, East India Company, which "had rushed with such ostentation of power and boasting to an unjust war sunk under the calamity, and the public partook of its weakness," he was aware that "the sword of invasion is not pleasant to draw."

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Ms. Durriya Kazi conducted a CBEC Forum titled "Forgotten Stories of Karachi" on Saturday, July 26, 2025. Using archives and iconic photographs, she traced the history and evolution of Karachi as a city.

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Asked at the age of 59 to fight a war better suited to a man of 39, he succeeded in conquering Sindh at the Battle of Miani. His strategy: "My wish is to be left quiet a little while each day, to obtain an insight into Indian wars history and country; for knowledge and thought only can enable us to act wisely in such positions." He had more respect for his seasoned native soldiers than fellow British officers, "youngsters who make curry, drink champagne and avoid the sun."

Although Admiral Maitland, in command of HMS Wellesley, had formally occupied Karachi on 7 February 1839, and Sir Charles Napier was only expected to stop the rebellion, he took it upon himself to take charge of Karachi, a town of "miserable mud villages with a population of robbers, all filth and poverty and misery." He wanted to "show government how very important a place it may become and how to make it so." His dream was to turn Karachi into the Star of Asia.

He created a water supply system, developed roads and sanitation, created a modern police force, and developed the port with docks and a causeway to Keamari. He built Napier Barracks for the military and installed a Lighthouse on Manora. The Obelisk at the end of Karachi's Port Grand marks the spot from where he left Karachi in 1847, a mere four years after he took charge, and a hundred years later, Karachi was declared the capital of Pakistan.

In between, his successor Bartle Frere, and the many illustrious mayors like Jamshed Nusserwanji Mehta and

Harchandrai Vishandas, fulfilled his vision, attracting members from Parsi community, entrepreneurs from Gujarat and Goan and British businesses. India's first airport was established in Karachi, as well as its first Telegraph connection.

Where Napier could see the future of Karachi, he, like so many who came after, was unaware of or had forgotten its past. It was clearly more than miserable mud villages. The only remnants that survive are the temples and shrines. At the time of British conquest, there were 34 temples, 21 Mosques, and 13 shrines dotted all over the city. Who were the people who visited a 1500-year-old Hindu temple dedicated to Punjmukhi Hanuman? What brought Sufis from across the Muslim world- the 8th, 9th, and 10th century shrines of Syed Noor Ali Shah, Abdullah Ghazi, and Yousuf Shah Ghazi, Pir Hasan Ghazi Shah, and Pir Sakhi Sultan Manghopir in the 13th century? Who were the devotees who visited these temples and shrines? Some suggest that the many mounds of Karachi may hide dwellings of the past.

With each decade, Karachi continues to forget – forget its reputation as the cleanest city of the East, as the city of cinemas and entertainment, as the city of peaceful entrepreneurship and generous philanthropy.

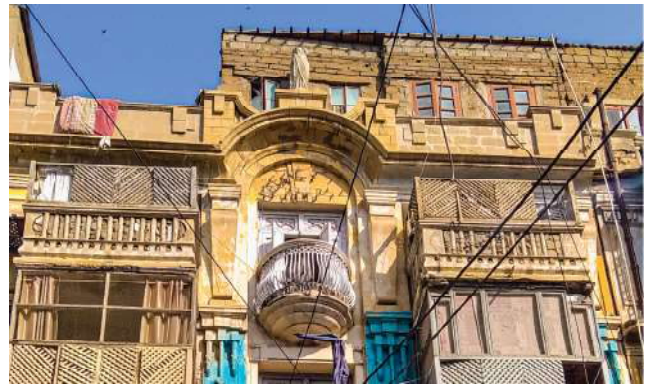
As we emerge from the trauma of the last three decades, Karachi is trying to remember once more and wrest away its history from those who would tear down its buildings, its stories, and its future.

IF STATUES COULD SPEAK

Karachi is a mosaic built over the years by many hands - British colonial administrators, Marwari and Jewish architects, and members of Hindu, Parsi and Muslim communities. The statues of the city reflect its multicultural past.

Who would expect to find in Karachi a statue of the Greek goddess of health, Hygieia, from whose name the word "hygiene" is derived? Yet her broken statue crowns an old building (seen in the picture) on Burns Road. Beneath it, a worn-out signpost reads "Health Home." Currently, the building is used as a residential flat, but perhaps it served as a healthcare facility in the distant past.

Before the partition of the Indian subcontinent, squares and famous buildings of Karachi featured statues of Queen Victoria, King Edward VII, Gandhi, and prominent city mayors like Harchandrai and Eduljee Dinshaw. The tower of Lakshmi Building, Karachi's first high-rise, showcased the iconic Hindu goddess Lakshmi. In 1964, many of these statues were removed to appease Saudi sentiments during the King's visit. Others fell victim to vandalism. Today, most of the statues survive only in old photographs or in damp municipal warehouses. Their disappearance stirred little outcry, but their absence has left a deafening void. The statues were storytellers of times when Karachi was a glorious confluence of different worlds.



Picture and text by Mr. Farid bin Masood.

LAMENTING THE DECAY OF KARACHI'S CEMETERIES

Farid bin Masood*

Seventeenth-century philosopher Giambattista Vico considered respectful disposal of the dead to be one of the three foundational rituals at the core of every human civilization.¹ Burial sites, therefore, are not merely physical structures but also serve as archives of stories, of communities that no longer exist, and people who inhabited that region in the past. The architecture of these sites provides a window into the evolution of Karachi as a city. However, much has been lost with the passage of time and due to a lack of interest in preserving the city's history.

I remember as a child, while driving towards Thatta from Karachi on the National Highway, my mother would gesture towards a mysterious place on the left side of the road, beyond the Foundation for Advancement of Science and Technology (FAST) University. She said this place was Chaukhandi, a place no one in my family or friends had ever visited. In my adventurous adolescence, a friend and I decided to visit this place to discover its mysteries. As we hopped off the minibus, a narrow street between a *basti* (a densely populated slum) and a truck stand led us to an unwallled complex of hundreds of intricately carved tombs. Unlike any graves I had ever seen, they rose like stepped pyramids of sandstone, each one unique and meticulously crafted.

The place was deserted, the silence broken by barking stray dogs. A few men in rags huddled beside a group of graves, perhaps smoking drugs. Battling feelings of unease mixed with wonder and excitement, I insisted to my friend that we must leave before dark. Before leaving, we captured countless photographs to memorialize our adventure.

Much later, I learned that the Chaukhandi tombs date back to between the 15th and 18th centuries. Their origins remain unknown. Historically, no human settlement had existed in their close vicinity. People claim the graves might belong to an earlier generation of a Sindhi or a Baloch tribe, perhaps Kalmati, Jokhio, or Jam. The first official documentation of these tombs appeared during the colonial era by the British in the mid-19th century.

There is a debate about the meaning of "Chaukhandi." Some historians believe it indicates a place of origin (like "Lahori" for someone from Lahore), based on an inscription reading:

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"Jam Murid bin Haji Sahib Chaukhandi." However, a tomb from a later period at another site in Karachi bears: "This Chaukhandi is on Malik Mureed Khan Kalmati bin Babar Khan." Therefore, others suggest that the word Chaukhandi may describe the architectural style of these tombs or may simply mean "grave" in a local dialect.

The inscriptions and motifs on these graves are different from those of other sandstone graves in the coastal regions of Sindh and Balochistan. Some of the graves in Chaukhandi feature mounted horsemen, weapons such as swords and bows, and hunting scenes, presumably belonging to men. Others display necklaces, bracelets, and rings, attributed to the graves of women. Images of living creatures carved alongside Arabic religious calligraphy is an anomaly as Muslim religious spaces traditionally disapprove of images of living beings. This may reflect an amalgam of pre-Islamic and Islamic traditions in Sindh. In the early 20th century, Dutch archaeologist J.P. Vogel wrote that these tombs were dissimilar to Muslim graves around the world.²

Since my adolescent adventure, I have visited Chaukhandi thrice. Each time I noticed with dismay and sadness the gradual erosion of the tombs, the inscriptions grown fainter and a few carved slabs vanished, probably stolen. This reflects government and public apathy towards the preservation of heritage. With Karachi's land becoming increasingly attractive for real estate builders, the site has also seen various attempts at encroachment by them.

Chaukhandi is not alone in being neglected in Karachi. The graves of the legendary Morro and his brothers, immortalized in Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai's magnum opus *Risalo*, now lie abandoned under the concrete shadow of Gulbai flyover.

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Sandstone graves at Chaukhandi. They present distinct architecture different from other graves in Sindh and Balochistan. Photo by Mr. Farid bin Masood.

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Elsewhere, the Bene Israel graveyard and Abraham Chowk (now called *Cheel Chowk*) graveyard in Lyari are covered with thorny bushes, a distressing memorial to the city's once-vibrant Baghdadi and Bene Israel Jewish communities of merchants and architects before their exodus from Pakistan in 1948.

Karachi's once-affluent Parsi community has also dwindled, and their last Tower of Silence (Zoroastrian funerary site) in DHA Phase 1 now stands as a stark reminder of their fading presence from a city they actively built and called home. In the famous *Gora Qabristan* (cemetery for Christians) in Karachi Cantonment, the tomb of Lady Phyllis Louise Lawrence, who established the first midwifery college at The Lady Dufferin Hospital in Karachi, is besieged by encroachments. Its elegant Mughal-style structure of white ivory



The Lady Phyllis Louise Lawrence's tomb, encroached upon by residential buildings from three sides, and covered with trash.

marble has disintegrated. It was replaced in 2007 with a yellow sandstone building that resembles the Chaukhandi style, but that too is in shambles.

Urdu poet Jaun Elia (d. 2002) once observed: "Material remains alone cannot carry a civilization's legacy; there must also be a chain of stories and traditions linking the past to the present."³

The decay of sites such as Chaukhandi is especially tragic. The stories have long been forgotten and now even their material signposts are slipping into oblivion.

References available in the online Bioethics Links, Vol. 21, Issue 2, <https://siut.org/bioethics/lamenting-the-decay/>



White marble graves in the old Bene Israel Jewish Graveyard bearing Hebrew inscriptions and the Star of David. Photo by: Dr. Bushra Shirazi.

CBEC FORUMS



"Re-imagining Vaccination as a Public Health Priority: From Polio to HPV" on October 4, 2025, with Dr. Natasha Anwar, Assistant Professor, AKU and MBE alumnus (online) and Dr. Asma Nasim, Professor, SIUT and PGD alumnus (third, left). They addressed systematic failures in vaccination programs in the country.



"Depiction of Gender Roles in the 1960s Cinema of Pakistan" with Dr. Kamran Asdar Ali, Professor of Anthropology, University of Texas, Austin on December 18, 2025, during Module 4. This session was not only attended by the PGD and MBE students, but also attracted a large on-site and online audience.

HINDU TEMPLES: ADDING TO KARACHI'S HISTORICAL DIVERSITY

Murli Dhar*

Prior to 1947, Karachi was a Hindu-majority city, but large numbers of Hindus emigrated to India following partition of the subcontinent. Many emigrated overseas over time. Hindus now comprise 1.12% of the population in Karachi, approximately 244,689 individuals (Pakistan Census, 2023).

Nevertheless, the Hindu community has left indelible marks on the cultural and architectural heritage of Karachi. These include the iconic Hindu Gymkhana, established in 1925, which currently houses the National Academy of Performing Arts (NAPA). Hindu temples (*mandirs*), have long existed in

city. Prior to 1947, there were around 200-250 temples. The number has since dwindled to an estimated 50–70. Some are notable, prominent temples, whereas others are small, located where Hindus reside. A few are as old as 1500 years, including the Swami Narayan Mandir, the Lakshmi Narayan Temple, the Ratneshwar MahaDev *Mandir*, and the Panchmukhi Hanuman *Mandir*.

Hindu temples are unique in the sense that they are devoted to specific deities and celebrate different Hindu festivals within their premises. Here I describe two of the most prominent and the oldest temples in Karachi.

Swami Narayan Mandir



Photo Credit: Facebook Page of Shri Swami Narayan Satsangis Karachi

This temple built in 1788 is located at Serai Quarters, opposite City Courts on M.A Jinnah Road. This is the only surviving Swaminarayan temple in Pakistan. The Swaminarayans are a major denomination within Hinduism who are strictly vegetarians.

During partition, this temple worked as temporary station for Hindus in Karachi who wished to migrate to India.

My favorite tidbit about this temple is the restaurant located within its premises which serves delicious vegetarian food. The food is consumed not only by Hindus but is also quite popular among Muslims. The restaurant is also responsible for serving food during large religious congregations. This temple is renowned for celebrating all the main religious festivals including Diwali, Janmashtami, Dussehra, and Holi among others.

Shri Ratneshwar Mahadev Mandir



Photo Credit: Dawn.com

What makes this 300 year old temple unusual is that it is under a cave situated at the Clifton beach, with six levels underground. The sculptures of Hindu deities were made by the renowned sculptor Faqeera, under the guidance of Ismail Gulgee, a famous Muslim Pakistani artist.

Each Monday, *Bundara* (free food) consisting of *dal chawal* (lentils and rice) is served to all devotees after the prayers.

Several legends are associated with this temple, including a hidden freshwater spring and a secret tunnel that connects to the Mohatta Palace. Another legend says the third eye of Lord Shiva, the deity worshipped there, resides in this temple. He watches over the Arabian Sea, shielding Karachi from calamities. This idea might sound familiar to some since Muslims hold a similar belief regarding Abdullah Shah Gazi, a Muslim saint buried nearby.

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CBEC-SIUT LOSES A BENEFACTOR, SUPPORTER AND FRIEND

Eulogy: Dr. Manzoor Ahmed (1934-2025)

Farhat Moazam*

Dr. Manzoor Ahmed, philosopher, renowned scholar and educator par excellence, died on December 22, 2025, after an illustrious career that spanned several decades. Following his initial graduate education in Pakistan, he obtained a doctorate in Philosophy of Science from the University of London. In his lifetime, Dr. Manzoor held many leading academic positions including Chairman of the Department of Philosophy and Dean of the Faculty of Arts in the University of Karachi, Rector of the International Islamic University, Islamabad, and Vice Chancellor of the Hamdard University, Karachi.

For me personally, Dr. Manzoor was a mentor cum friend who played a seminal role in the early years of the Center of Biomedical Ethics and Culture, SIUT (inaugurated October 2004). He was an erudite scholar, a polymath with years of experience whose guidance and advice was invaluable to us as we thought through areas we wished to include in the bioethics educational programs we were planning. He also introduced us to reputable scholars in many disciplines as potential teachers for our academic programs. Some, Dr. Khalid Masud (renowned scholar of Islamic Law) and Dr. Wahab Suri (Chairperson, Department of Philosophy, KU) among them, became the Center's most valued Associate Faculty.

Dr. Manzoor used to hold informal Sunday *baithaks* (gatherings) in his house, open to all, in which individuals from diverse backgrounds (philosophers, religious scholars, writers, journalists, teachers, members of public, and others), would come together for lively discussions about a variety of topics over cups of tea. Nothing was off the table. Attending these *baithaks* (I was generally the only woman present) served as a catalyst for initiating the "Socratic Hour" in CBEC. Led by Dr. Manzoor these sessions served as primers in critical thinking and logical argumentation for a nascent faculty. The Socratic Hour eventually morphed into the popular "CBEC Forum" that continues to this day.

A man of slight built, huge intellect and twinkling eyes, Dr. Manzoor had an unassuming manner that could nevertheless cut through illogical positions like a knife. He wrote and published, in Urdu and English, on a wide range of subjects – philosophy and ethics, historical and contemporary perspectives on Islam, and the political,

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Dr. Manzoor Ahmed (second from right) leads a Socratic Hour at CBEC in 2007. These were attended by faculty, students and members of public alike.

religious and social conundrums in Pakistan. Manzoor sahib (as I would address him) had a droll sense of humor. He would regale me with stories about his youth when he adopted wrestling as a hobby (in pre-partition India) and the *pehalwans* (wrestlers) who instructed him in this art.

He knew and admired Ivan Illich, a radical Austrian philosopher (d. 2002) who was world famous during the 1970s and 1980s. Once when Illich visited Karachi he insisted on staying with Manzoor sahib rather than in a hotel. The latter would laugh about anxious days ensuring that Illich had a comfortable stay. It was Manzoor sahib who introduced me to Illich's publications criticizing the role of modern medicine and its claim that it could reduce human suffering. Illich argued instead that commercialization of medical services medicalized human lives and increased clinical and social iatrogenesis. I can recall the many discussions Manzoor sahib, a philosopher of science himself, and I had on this subject.

Dr. Manzoor's death is an irreplaceable loss not only for his family but for Pakistan as a whole. However, his legacy will continue, alive in the hearts and minds of those whose lives he touched in innumerable ways.

“
[The mental block of our society] cannot be removed unless we shift our dogmatic paradigm and open ourselves to the possibility of pluralistic logical discourses ... Inputs have to come from Sociology, Psychology, Philosophy and Religion for working out reasonable criteria and norms for developing a balanced mind.

Quoted from "Reflections on our Mindset" by Dr. Manzoor Ahmed, Bioethics Links, 2007, Volume 3, Issue 1.

CBEC-SIUT ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE

6th Asia Pacific Bioethics Education Network (APBEN) Conference

October 31-November 1, 2025, Hong Kong, China



Organized by the Centre for Bioethics, Chinese University of Hong Kong, the event featured plenary sessions, workshops and symposiums. CBEC faculty, Mr. Farid bin Masood (right) presented findings from his MBE thesis on medical decision-making whereas Saima Saleem (left), PGD alumna (Class of 2023) and Communication Consultant at SIUT, presented her PGD project on patients' rights. Both seen here with their Best Presentation Awards.

Global Forum on Bioethics in Research (GFBR): Reimagining research partnerships

November 18-19, 2025, Accra, Ghana



Ms. Sualeha Shekhani (right) attended the GFBR as a Planning Committee member, which explored how global health research collaborations can be made just and equitable by addressing power imbalances. She co-chaired a plenary session, "Futures: reimagining health research partnerships" with Dr. Joseph Ali (North America, second from right). Speakers on the panel included Dr. Nadia Tagoe (Ghana, first right) and Dr. Pamela Cajilig (Philippines, second right).

Korean Society for Medical Ethics Conference: Global Health Ethics for the 21st Century

November 26-27, Seoul, South Korea



Dr. Moazam seen here with conference participants and Professor Ilhak Lee, Chair, Medical Humanities and Social Sciences. She gave a talk about "Doing Bioethics in Pakistan: An Insider's Perspective." In this, she used local cases to highlight contextual ethical issues related to practicing medicine in Pakistan. She also attended the concomitant annual meeting of WHO Collaborating Centres for Bioethics and presented CBEC's activities of the past year.

Inauguration of the International Islamic Bioethics Association (IIBA)

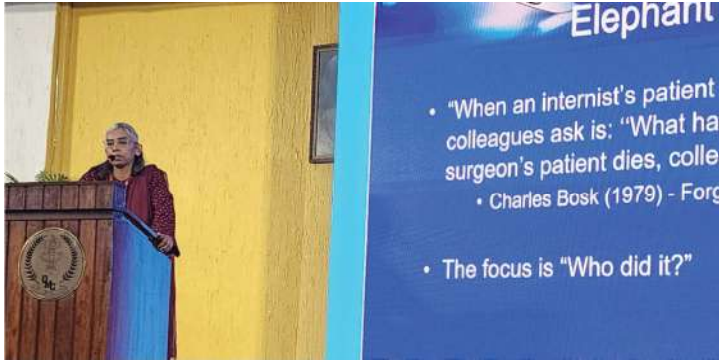
December 10-11, 2025, Doha, Qatar



Dr. Farhat Moazam (first, left) at the IIBA inaugural event with its founding president, Dr. Mohammed Ghaly (third, left), Professor at the Research Center for Islamic Legislation and Ethics. IIBA aims to enhance Islamic contributions to global ethical dialogue. Dr. Moazam is a member of the IIBA Advisory Board, which includes international scholars such as Dr. Mohammad Ahmad Aljarallah (Kuwait, sixth, left), and Dr. Nancy Jecker (USA, third, right) among others.

CBEC-SIUT IN NATIONAL EVENTS

**Second Annual Surgical Conference:
Dow University of Health Sciences (DUHS)**
October 16-17, 2025, Karachi



During this conference, Dr. Nida Wahid Bashir gave a talk titled “Transparency in Surgical Errors: An Ethical Perspective.” Her talk highlighted the importance of embedding ethical values within the healthcare system to maintain accountability when dealing with surgical errors. Dr. Nida emphasized the role of healthcare organizations as moral agents responsible for ensuring better reporting and disclosure systems. The highlight of the plenary was that it was well attended by the student body at DUHS.

**Symposium: The Wounded Storyteller
Lahore University of Medical Sciences**
October 31, 2025, Lahore



Dr. Aamir Jafarey (front left) was invited to this symposium due to his background in clinical medicine and bioethics. His talk, “(Un)Silencing Narratives through Bioethics: Using Humanities to Examine the Human Condition,” critiqued the limitations of a medical education system narrowly focused on ‘disease’ at the expense of the fuller experience of ‘illness.’ He then demonstrated how CBECS’s curriculum uses literature, art, and film to provide health professionals with a deeper analytical framework.

**ICON 2026: The Indus Hospital and Health
Network (IHNN)**
November 27, 2025, Karachi



Dr. Aamir Jafarey was invited as a panelist on a panel, “Ethics in Biorepositories: Challenges and Solutions.” The discussion provided insights into various misconceptions surrounding biobanks, not only among the public but also among healthcare professionals. Dr. Aamir features in the group photo with other panelists, including Dr. Abdul Bari Khan (IIHNN), Dr. Tania Bubela (Aga Khan University), Dr. Jamshed Akhter (National Institute of Child Health, Karachi), and Dr. Nasim Salahuddin (IIHN).

**33rd International Conference: Association of
Pediatric Surgeons of Pakistan (APSP)**
December 4-7, 2025, Karachi



Dr. Moazam gave a keynote address at the association’s conference. She is seen here with Dr. Muhammad Arshad, President APSP (second right) and Dr. Saleem Islam, pediatric surgeon and Chair, Department of Surgery, AKU, Karachi (far right). Her talk, “Ain’t nothing small about operating on little humans: Reflections of an erstwhile pediatric surgeon,” included empirical data from an ongoing CBECS study about male and female representation in different surgical subspecialties in Pakistan.

TRANSPLANT ETHICS AT PAKISTAN KIDNEY AND LIVER INSTITUTE

Faheem Khan*

October in Lahore often marks the transition from bright, sunny days to more subdued, overcast skies. It was during this period of seasonal change that CBEC–SIUT conducted a 2 day workshop (2-3 October) on Clinical and Research Ethics at the Pakistan Kidney and Liver Institute & Research Center (PKLI & RC). PKLI is a public sector institution that provides treatment for kidney and liver-related diseases. In November 2025, it achieved a milestone for successful completion of 1000 liver, and 1100 kidney transplants.

Initially planned for 30 participants, the workshop received 90 applications. Participants eventually selected for the workshop belonged to diverse services, including Liver, Kidney, and Bone Marrow Transplant Services, Pharmacy, Nursing, Infectious Diseases, Pathology, Gastroenterology, Acute Medical Care, Quality and Patient Safety. A significant number of attendees were from outside PKLI indicating a genuine interest in the field of ethics within the region.

CBEC Faculty included Dr. Moazam, Dr. Aamir and Dr. Ali Lanewala, who made their way to Lahore to conduct the workshop. They were joined there by Dr. Natasha Anwar, MBE Alumnus Class of 2019, and Dr. Farkhanda Ghafoor, PGD Alumnus Class of 2006, both based in Lahore.

The first day was dedicated to teaching essential concepts in clinical ethics, including issues related to informed consent in Pakistan, as well as privacy and confidentiality. CBEC's newly released teaching video, "Whose Life is it Anyway?" highlighted the culturally rooted challenges surrounding medical decision-making among incapacitated patients. A



CBEC faculty with workshop participants at PKLI, Lahore. Dr. Faheem Khan (sitting, left), PGD Alumnus Class of 2014 and a psychiatrist at PKLI, played the central role in organizing this workshop.

dedicated session on gender-related issues in transplantation received high ratings in participant feedback.

The second day featured a panel discussion on Organ Transplantation which included CBEC Faculty and PKLI faculty involved in transplantation. The panel discussed cases and how they would play out in the cultural context of Pakistan. There was also an interesting discussion on the deceased organ donation program and the challenges of implementing it in the country. A session was devoted to highlighting a relevant issue: publication ethics. The final session also covered ethical governance in research and ethical considerations in the emerging field of genomics.

The success of the workshop was evident from the active engagement of participants and the expressions of interest in pursuing formal bioethics education at CBEC. Participants also requested that similar sessions be held quarterly.



During the Research and Public Health Ethics Module (September 2025), faculty took out-of-town certificate course participants and students for chai and chaat.

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Dr. Bushra Shirazi (standing) facilitating a session on bioethics education for participants enrolled in the Certificate in Health Professions Education (CHPE) at Liaquat College of Medicine & Dentistry, Darul Sehat Campus, Karachi.

CBEC-SIUT INTERNSHIP FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Organized by CBEC faculty members, Mr. Farid Bin Masood and Dr. Nida Wahid Bashir, this year's internship received an overwhelming 87 applications. Ten students were ultimately selected, with 9 participants completing the internship, held from July 21 to 26, 2025. Participants represented schools from different parts of Karachi.

This year's program adopted a wider approach beyond medical ethics to make it relevant for students interested in fields other than medicine. To achieve this, diverse pedagogies were utilized, including movie screening, group activities, discussions and a debate.

As an example, Ursula Le Guin's short story "Those who walk away from Omelas" was used to make students reflect upon ideas of justice and the moral compromises one makes for the greater good. "Rice Plate," a short Indian film, was screened to explore issues of prejudice and stereotypes that influence human behaviors. Students particularly enjoyed the moral game involving a lifeboat exercise where they had to decide who to save among a group of people. They were also asked to share the reasoning behind their selection through which they got an insight into their personal and social biases related to age, gender, and social standing. A session also involved reading out a few satirical Urdu pieces, based on parodies of Aesop's tales, on social issues such as discrimination, authoritarianism and the impacts of materialism on human relationships.

An activity required students to work in pairs to design advocacy campaigns on walkable cities, carbon footprint and

using Google for medical self-diagnosis. Students were asked to research these topics and turn their findings into engaging social media content for public awareness.

Feedback from participants indicated that the session they enjoyed most was the 55-word short-story writing exercise. Based on diverse prompts, students wrote short narratives on which they received feedback from the faculty. In fact, some of them shared that this was the first time they had written a piece of fiction.

Overall, students appreciated the interactive nature of the internship program, along with the consistent involvement of the faculty. However, they wished that the internship had focused more on ethical issues related to medicine and healthcare.



Internship students take part in a moral game, a modified version of the lifeboat thought experiment, led by CBEC Faculty, Mr. Farid bin Masood.

CBEC'S FEATHERED NEIGHBORS



As humans encroach on their habitats, many bird species have learnt to adapt to urban life. These pictures show mourning doves (left) and a white-cheeked bulbul (right) on CBEC's terrace, a green space in a concrete landscape. Three Tyto alba owls (center) are seen in a cemented alcove in a building across CBEC's kitchen.

STRENGTHENING RESEARCH CAPACITY THROUGH CK-BTI

Hybrid Practicum Research in Bioethics

4 Online Sessions

3-day physical workshop, Nairobi, Kenya



Practicum faculty, Ms. Sualeha Shekhani (sitting, second from left) and Dr. Aamir Jafarey (sitting, second from right) with CK-BTI program director, Professor Elizabeth Bukusi (sitting, center) and participants in Nairobi, Kenya.

In an exciting new development for the CBEC–KEMRI Bioethics Training Initiative (CK-BTI), a hybrid practicum was conducted this year. The CK-BTI program has consistently adapted itself to meet the needs of participants. In previous years, the program had innovated itself through an increased focus on bioethics education. This time, the objective was to develop the skill set of the faculty involved in bioethics teaching within the CK-BTI program, and others supervising Master’s theses at two Kenyan universities, AMREF and Mount Kenya.

This practicum, conducted by Ms. Sualeha Shekhani and Dr. Aamir Jafarey, covered a wide range of topics. The sessions were focused on providing normative frameworks for bioethics research, understanding the importance of conceptual frameworks, and navigating the often-confusing terrain of methodologies versus methods in research.

The feedback was enthusiastic. Participants shared that, for the first time, they clearly understood the distinction between primary versus secondary research. They believed they were better equipped to support students through the entire research journey—from research question formulation to methodological alignment. Many described the practicum as a “missing piece” added to their supervisory toolkit. The added advantage was working on bioethics-related research questions, which were then mapped across the entire research lifecycle.

Certificate Course Scientific and Ethical Dimensions of Human Subject Research

7 Sessions (2 hours each), SIUT, Karachi

Recognizing the strong influence that scientific methods have on the ethical quality of a study, this course, under the CK-BTI program, targeted these interconnected areas. The catalyst for this course was based on gaps identified during Ethics Review Committee (ERC) proposal evaluations at SIUT, where residents often struggled with core research concepts, misused technical terminology, and encountered difficulties completing the ERC application form.

The course included trainees from different departments including Urology, General Surgery, Gastrointestinal Medicine, and Physiotherapy. The small group format of 24 learners created an engaging environment in which participants were encouraged to directly apply newly acquired concepts to their own research ideas. The course topics included developing original research questions, identifying independent and dependent variables, and constructing measurable objectives and hypotheses. Strong emphasis was placed on demonstrating how methodological choices shape ethical dimensions of research projects.

Participants asked thoughtful questions, discussed uncertainties, and often stayed back after sessions to explore their research ideas further. Participants appreciated the consistent feedback provided to them by the faculty. This initiative reflects CBEC’s ongoing commitment to strengthen the capacity for scientifically robust and ethically sound research within SIUT.



CBEC faculty, Ms. Sualeha Shekhani, conducting a session with course participants from SIUT on “Study Designs: The Science and Ethics.”

GLOBAL AMBASSADORS: IMPACT OF CBEC-SIUT'S ALUMNI

Since 2011, CBEC has been following alumni activities in bioethics through annual feedback. These Alumni Reports capture alumni involvement in activities across different domains. These include publications related to bioethics, membership in Ethics Review Committees (ERCs) and their involvement in teaching bioethics within or outside their institutions. Data is also collected regarding their participation in workshops and seminars, and attendance at conferences.

The Alumni Report 2024 marks an important transition from email-based data collection to a dedicated alumni portal hosted on the CBEC website. This will allow real time data collection, and improve both accuracy and accessibility. Below, we highlight some of the prominent areas in which CBEC alumni have made meaningful impacts.

MBE Alumni: Theses Publications

The Master's in Bioethics, initiated in 2011, has graduated 17 students to date. In its second year, students conduct original research for their theses on topics relevant to their contexts. Publications from these, which highlight voices in bioethics from Pakistan internationally, are shown below:

Aamir M Jafarey (Class of 2011). "A Degree in Bioethics: An "Introspective" Analysis from Pakistan." *Indian Journal of Medical Ethics*, 2014.

Bushra Shirazi (Class of 2011). "Impact of the Word "Cancer": A Pilot Study on Breast Cancer Patients from Pakistan." *Asian Bioethics Review*, 2017.

Saima Perwaiz Iqbal (Class of 2011). "Patients' perceptions on their involvement in medical education: a qualitative pilot study." *Journal of Academic Ethics*, 2013.

Elizabeth Bukusi (Class of 2013). "Views of the taught and the teachers on medical ethics teaching in two universities in Kenya." *Indian Journal of Medical Ethics*, 2022.

Ali Lanewala (Class of 2017). "Indirect costs associated with "free" paediatric haemodialysis: Experience from Karachi, Pakistan." *Indian Journal of Medical Ethics*, 2023.

Sualeha Siddiq Shekhani (Class of 2019). "Daughters and daughters-in-law providing elderly care: a qualitative study from Karachi, Pakistan." *BMC Geriatrics*, 2024.

John Weru (Class of 2021). "Ethical Issues Faced by Health Care Professionals in the Provision of Palliative Care in Kenya." *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management*, 2024.

PGD Alumni: Notable Publications

Inayat Ullah Memon (Class of 2006): "Complexities of medical research in developing countries: Standard of care: Responsibilities of ethics committees." *European Journal of Medical Research*, 2017.

Muhammad Shahid Shamim (Class of 2008): "A contextually relevant ethics education mode." *International Journal of Ethics Education*, 2020.

Sarwat Nasreen (Class of 2010). "Being Robin Hood: Weighing Risks versus Benefits." *Asian Bioethics Review*, 2010.

Mohsin Azam (Class of 2012) & **Saleha Anwar** (Class of 2016): "Mentoring ethics in postgraduate surgical training: A developing country perspective from Pakistan." *Surgical Neurology International*, 2013.

Asma Nasim (Class of 2014): "Incorporating ethics into infectious disease clinical practice guidelines." *Clinical Microbiology and Infection*, 2025.

Muhammad Fayyaz (Class of 2016). "Medical Ethics in Military Medical Setups." *Pakistan Armed Forces Medical Journal*, 2018.

Murtaza Dhrolia (Class of 2018). "No" to placebo-controlled trials of Covid-19 vaccines." *Indian Journal of Medical Ethics*, 2021.

Gideon Cornel Msee (Class of 2018). "Debates and discourses for teaching bioethics to a research ethics secretariat in Nairobi, Kenya: A report." *Indian Journal of Medical Ethics*, 2023.

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THREE ALUMNI ELECTED TO THE NATIONAL BIOETHICS COMMITTEE FOR RESEARCH (NBC-R), PAKISTAN in 2025



Three alumni from the CBEC-SIUT were elected to the NBC-R, including Dr. Faheem Khan (PGD Class of 2014; standing first from right), Dr. Natasha Anwar (MBE Class of 2019; standing third from left), and Dr. Abubakar Ali Saad (PGD Class of 2023, not in the picture). This has doubled the number of CBEC alumni in the committee from five to ten individuals from the year 2024 to 2025. The current Chair of the NBC-R, Dr. Saima Perwaiz Iqbal (sitting fourth from left), is also an MBE alumnus. The photo features the NBC-R members and its Secretariat during a meeting in Islamabad.

Research Ethics Governance

Members of Institutional ERCs	53
Chairs of Institutional ERCs	03
Vice Chairs of Institutional ERCs	02

Alumni are affiliated with multiple ERCs across 19 institutions in Karachi, 7 in Islamabad, 7 in Lahore, 3 in Kenya, and one each in Jamshoro, Larkana, Mirpur Khas, Quetta, Peshawar and Multan. Majority of these institutions are based in the province of Sindh.

Other Notable Activities by Alumni

Muhammad Ikram Ali (PGD Class of 2016): Facilitator, Medical Ethics and Jurisprudence at CPSP, Pakistan.

Aruna Dawani (PGD Class of 2016): Member, Global Health Network, University of Oxford, UK.

Caroline Kithinji (MBE Class of 2017): Developer and Trainer, Ethics Curriculum for Laypersons, Kenya.

John Weru (MBE Class of 2021): Member, The Global Compliance Team, AKU Global.

Beenish Syed (PGD Class of 2023): Member, Ethics Advisory Committee, European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ESCMID).

Dr. Arfa Syeda Zehra (1943-2025)



Dr. Arfa (seen, teaching at the head of the table in December 2023) was a dedicated teacher and a beloved friend of CBEC. A Professor Emeritus at Forman Christian College, Lahore, she was renowned for her mastery of Urdu literature. For over a decade, Dr. Arfa taught humanities at the Centre, sharing fascinating stories with her characteristic wit.

Ms. Zubaida Mustafa (1941-2025)



One of the first female journalists in Pakistan, she was a long-term supporter of the Centre and attended most of its events. She wrote about the importance of including ethics in the national curriculum. The picture shows her (center) attending one of CBEC's events, with Dr. Adib Rizvi (left) and Dr. Anwar Naqvi (right).

Dr. Tashmeem Razzaki (1940-2025)



Dr. Tashmeem Razzaki, a microbiologist at SIUT, was an alumnus from CBEC's first PGD Class of 2006. She played a pioneering role in establishing the Department of Biotechnology at the University of Karachi. She is seen here (third from left) with CBEC faculty and alumni at the Asian Bioethics Conference in Tehran, Iran in 2009.

MBE CLASS OF 2026 EMBARK ON THEIR THESES

MBE students are encouraged to pursue contextual topics for their theses pertinent to the needs and local contexts. The two MBEs present here short abstracts of their studies that reflect their areas of interest.

Substitute Decision-Making in Healthcare: Views of Physicians from Karachi, Pakistan

Nida Wahid Bashir, General Surgeon, Karachi

As a practicing surgeon and a former member of a Hospital Ethics Committee at a tertiary care hospital, my encounters with substitute decision-making for incapacitated patients have generally been fascinating. In the absence of defined legal mechanisms concerning advance directives in Pakistan, it becomes a challenging task to identify substitute decision-makers, especially when many family members are involved. In my experience, quite frequently, the onus of safeguarding the best interest of the patient and making medical decisions, keeping the patient's preferences in mind, is shifted to the primary physician's shoulders.

Given the scarcity of literature on the subject from the Pakistani context, I am conducting a cross-sectional study on substitute decision-making in two tertiary care hospitals in Karachi. I will use a questionnaire to assess the knowledge and attitudes of physicians from different medical and surgical specialties, along with determining the common challenges they encounter regarding substitute decision-making. My study aims to provide insights into how clinicians perceive and navigate the ethically fraught process of decision-making in incapacitated patients within the hierarchical, collectivistic culture of Pakistan.

Attitudes Towards Ethical Challenges: Views of General Practitioners from Karachi, Pakistan

Zainab Najmuddin, Family Physician, Karachi

General Physicians (GPs) face a variety of ethical challenges in their daily practice as they are often the first point of contact for the patients and maintain long-term relationships with them. However, research conducted with general practitioners in Pakistan has focused on exploring their knowledge regarding ethical principles and is generally limited to tertiary care hospitals. Literature exploring the challenges that GPs encounter in their daily clinical practice is scarce.

My study will recruit GPs from Karachi who are registered with the College of Family Medicine Pakistan (CFMP). I will use a questionnaire to assess the frequency of common ethical challenges, categorized into four domains: resource allocation, disagreements among family members and physicians, interactions between physicians and the pharmaceutical industry, and issues related to privacy and confidentiality. Participants' attitudes toward these challenges will also be determined. My study's findings will provide an understanding of the types of ethical challenges faced by GPs. This, in turn, can help professional associations develop targeted educational activities to improve existing systems and practices.

DIVERSE PEDAGOGIES USED DURING ACADEMIC MODULES



Gender Ethics Module: During the Gender Walk, students assumed fictional roles and stepped forward or backward in response to privilege-based statements. This allowed them to reflect on the concept of intersectionality.



Research and Public Health Ethics Module: A role play on informed consent from vulnerable populations, with CBEC alumni acting as commercial sex workers and current students taking consent in a simulated research setting.

ANOTHER CLASS GRADUATES: PGD CLASS OF 2025



And it's a wrap! The graduating PGD Class of 2025, along with the MBE Class of 2026, CBEC Faculty, teachers and external examiners, pose for the traditional photograph at Dr. Moazam's house. The PGD students (listed below) will initiate their projects within their institutions in 2026.

<p>Zubair Ashraf Cardiologist, Rashid Latif Khan University (RLKU), Lahore Project: Introduction of Clinical Ethics to Postgraduate Residents and Medical Officers in Internal Medicine and Allied at RLKU</p>	<p>Touby Khan Pediatric Surgeon, National Institute of Child Health, Karachi Project: Introduction of Biomedical Ethics to Nursing Students at the National Institute of Child Health, Karachi</p>	<p>Abdul Qader Sukkurwala Immunologist, Sindh Institute of Urology & Transplantation, Karachi Project: Introducing Bioethics to Laboratory Technologists at Sindh Institute of Urology & Transplantation</p>
<p>Farhat Bashir Internist, United Medical and Dental College, Karachi Project: Teaching Biomedical Ethics to 3rd Year MBBS Students at United Medical and Dental College, Karachi</p>	<p>Sana Mirza Oral Pathologist, Liaquat University of Medical and Health Sciences (LUHMS), Jamshoro Project: Introducing Research Ethics to MPhil Oral Pathology Postgraduates at Institute of Dentistry, LUHMS</p>	<p>Summaiya Syed-Tariq Chief Police Surgeon, Department of Health, Karachi Project: Introduction to Basic Ethical Concepts & Their Practical Application in Medicolegal Procedures</p>
<p>Syed Imran Bukhari Orthopedic Surgeon, Lady Reading Hospital, Peshawar Project: Introduction of Biomedical Ethics to Postgraduate Orthopedic Residents at Lady Reading Hospital, Peshawar</p>	<p>Shumaila Rafi Medical Educationist, Dow University of Health Sciences, Karachi Project: Teaching Clinical Ethics to Postgraduate Medical Trainees at Civil Hospital Karachi</p>	<p>Ambreen Usmani Prosthodontist, Jinnah Medical and Dental College, Karachi Project: Teaching Clinical Ethics to Final Year Dental Students at Jinnah Medical and Dental College</p>
<p>Fakhir Raza Haidri Intensivist, Sindh Institute of Urology & Transplantation, Karachi Project: Introduction of Bioethics to Fellows of Critical Care Medicine at Sindh Institute of Urology & Transplantation, Karachi</p>	<p>Imtenan Sharif Public Health Specialist, Poonch Medical College, Rawalakot, AJK Project: Reinforcing Bioethics to Fourth Year Medical Students at Poonch Medical College, Rawalakot</p>	<p>Rabeiya Tazeem Physical Therapist, Ziauddin University, Karachi Project: Introduction to Biomedical Ethics to Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) Final Year Students at Ziauddin University</p>



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