# Shia Ismaili community prepares for Global Encounters festival under new Aga Khan leadership



Excitement is palpable within the Shia Ismaili community as they prepare to celebrate the arrival of the Chandelier, a prestigious symbol connected to Global Encounters. With approximately 15 million members globally, the community is gearing up for a festival in Dubai from July 20th to 27th, 2025. This event promises to unite Ismailis from around the world in a showcase of artistic and athletic talents while highlighting the community's enduring commitment to diversity and pluralism within Islam.

The festival marks a significant occasion and comes in the wake of the recent passing of Prince Karim al-Hussaini Aga Khan IV, who was instrumental in fostering cultural and artistic initiatives. His legacy continues under the guidance of his successor, Prince Rahim al-Hussaini Aga Khan V, who has taken on the mantle of leadership as the 50th Aga Khan following a ceremonial Takht Nashini in Lisbon. His vision is to carry forward the cultural and artistic legacy of his father by encouraging a spirit of unity and excellence among the community.

The Global Encounters initiative, with its two categories—Jubilee Games and Jubilee Arts—launched in conjunction with the previous leadership milestones, will feature participants from various countries competing in both sports and the arts. These events reflect the community's dedication to nurturing creativity and social development, with a strong emphasis on environmental sustainability resonating throughout the programming. According to event organizers, this alignment with Islamic principles touches upon the stewardship of the Earth and community responsibility.

Preparations for the festival have already begun in various regions, particularly in Sindh, where community members are eager for the symbolic Chandelier’s arrival. Unique ceremonies featuring cultural festivals, dances, and artistic performances are planned as key highlights. Voluntary escorts for the Chandelier have been arranged, underscoring the communal spirit and dedication of the members, particularly noted in a village in Hyderabad where a traditional ox cart procession drew local crowds.

Community volunteer Abdul Karim articulated the broader vision encapsulated by Global Encounters, stating that the event stands as a platform for promoting peace, unity, and diverse methodologies for serving societal needs. He emphasised that the preparations reflect a deep commitment to these values, illustrating the Ismaili community’s historical role in philanthropic efforts and cultural engagement both regionally and internationally.

As the countdown to this landmark event continues, the Global Encounters Festival stands as a testament to the resilience and solidarity of the Shia Ismaili community, reflective not just of their artistic aspirations, but also their ongoing commitment to fostering unity and meaningful engagement in the world today.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.nation.com.pk/07-Jun-2025/shia-ismaili-community-celebrates-arrival-of-chandelier-awaits-global-encounters-in-dubai), [[2]](https://cms.the.ismaili/global/news/institutional-news/global-encounters-festival-2025-dates-released)
* Paragraph 2 – [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/feb/05/rahim-al-hussaini-named-as-50th-aga-khan-after-death-of-father), [[4]](https://www.ft.com/content/096d51f6-fd87-4b41-9197-768d3c4abf00), [[5]](https://www.dawn.com/news/1891345/prince-rahim-becomes-the-new-aga-khan)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://cms.the.ismaili/global/news/institutional-news/global-encounters-festival-2025-dates-released), [[5]](https://www.dawn.com/news/1891345/prince-rahim-becomes-the-new-aga-khan), [[7]](https://the.ismaili/global/news/institutional-news/have-you-heard-about-ge-challenges)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.nation.com.pk/07-Jun-2025/shia-ismaili-community-celebrates-arrival-of-chandelier-awaits-global-encounters-in-dubai), [[6]](https://ismailimail.blog/2025/03/28/celebrating-unity-ismaili-centre-dubai-marks-uae-year-of-community-with-ramadan-suhoor/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.nation.com.pk/07-Jun-2025/shia-ismaili-community-celebrates-arrival-of-chandelier-awaits-global-encounters-in-dubai)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.nation.com.pk/07-Jun-2025/shia-ismaili-community-celebrates-arrival-of-chandelier-awaits-global-encounters-in-dubai> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://cms.the.ismaili/global/news/institutional-news/global-encounters-festival-2025-dates-released> - The Ismaili community has announced that the Global Encounters Festival 2025 will be held from 20 to 27 July in Dubai, UAE. This event aims to showcase the community's artistic and athletic talents, promoting environmental sustainability in line with Islamic teachings on stewardship of the earth. The festival will feature established and emerging talents, fostering unity and excellence within the global Jamat.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/feb/05/rahim-al-hussaini-named-as-50th-aga-khan-after-death-of-father> - Following the passing of his father, Prince Karim al-Hussaini Aga Khan IV, Prince Rahim al-Hussaini has been named the 50th Aga Khan, the spiritual leader of the Ismaili Muslims. The Aga Khan is considered a direct descendant of the Prophet Muhammad and is treated as a head of state by the Ismaili community, which numbers between 12 to 15 million people worldwide.
4. <https://www.ft.com/content/096d51f6-fd87-4b41-9197-768d3c4abf00> - Prince Karim al-Hussaini Aga Khan IV, the 49th hereditary Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims, passed away at the age of 88 in Lisbon on February 4, 2025. He was known for his philanthropic efforts, establishing the Aga Khan Development Network, which invests $1 billion annually into global projects in education, healthcare, and environmental sectors, primarily in Africa and Asia.
5. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1891345/prince-rahim-becomes-the-new-aga-khan> - Prince Rahim al-Hussaini Aga Khan V has formally assumed the role of the 50th hereditary Imam of Ismaili Muslims during the Takht Nashini ceremony in Lisbon. He has urged his followers to take action to protect the climate and pledged to dedicate his life to the well-being of his community. Prince Rahim is the eldest son of the late Aga Khan IV and has been involved in various initiatives within the Aga Khan Development Network.
6. <https://ismailimail.blog/2025/03/28/celebrating-unity-ismaili-centre-dubai-marks-uae-year-of-community-with-ramadan-suhoor/> - On 13 March 2025, the Ismaili Centre Dubai hosted a Ramadan Suhoor and panel discussion to commemorate the UAE President’s announcement of 2025 as the 'Year of Community.' The event featured a panel discussion titled 'Building Bridges and Strengthening Global Communities in the UAE Year of Community 2025,' highlighting the importance of fostering unity, collaboration, and shared values.
7. <https://the.ismaili/global/news/institutional-news/have-you-heard-about-ge-challenges> - The Global Encounters Festival 2025 is launching GE Challenges—a series of opportunities for the global Jamat to come together and make meaningful lifestyle changes. Over the next few months, a series of engaging challenges will promote health, creativity, sustainability, and community connection as the community counts down to the GE Festival in Dubai in July 2025.