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Press Release

For Immediate Release

His Highness the Aga Khan arrives in Mumbai

Spiritual Leader on final stop of 10-day official Diamond Jubilee visit

Mumbai, Maharashtra, 28 February 2018 - His Highness the Aga Khan, Imam (spiritual leader) of the Shia Ismaili Muslims, and founder and chairman of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), arrived in Mumbai today on the final stop of his 10-day official visit to the country at the invitation of the Government of India. He was received at the airport by Prof Ram Shinde, Cabinet Minister, Government of Maharashtra for Water Conservation and Protocol, Shri. Raj Gopal Deora, Principal Secretary Protocol and Shri JaiJeet Singh, Addl DG Police, Maharashtra.

During his visit to Mumbai, His Highness will meet with Honourable Shri C.Vidyasagar Rao, Governor of Maharashtra and Shri Devendra Fadnavis, Chief Minister of Maharashtra.

The visit of the Aga Khan to Mumbai is part of a series of visits that coincide with the commemoration of His Highness the Aga Khan's Diamond Jubilee, marking the 60th anniversary of his leadership as Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslim Community. The Aga Khan's Jubilees have traditionally served as opportunities to launch or advance social, cultural and economic development projects. These include the development of hospitals, schools, universities, cultural and financial institutions that serve people of all backgrounds and faiths.

In Islam's ethical tradition, religious leaders not only interpret the faith but also have a responsibility to help improve the quality of life of their community and the societies among which they live. For the Aga Khan, this has meant dedicating his life to addressing the concerns of the developing world.

Commensurate with his institutional responsibility to improve the quality of worldly life for concerned communities around the world, the Aga Khan has listed a number of goals for his Diamond Jubilee, including poverty alleviation, the promotion of early childhood and primary education, the strengthening of institutions and invigorating civil society.

The Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) has had a long history in India, and in particular Gujarat, where the first Aga Khan school was established in Mundra in 1905. The school was the precursor to the Aga Khan Education Services (AKES) which today manages close to 30 schools including the Diamond Jubilee schools in Mumbai.

The Aga Khan Health Services (AKHS) operates the Prince Aly Khan Hospital, a 162-bed multi-specialty acute care hospital in Mumbai, established in 1945. The ISO-certified hospital is best known for its services in oncology and cardiovascular diseases, and is renowned as a referral centre regionally and internationally. It is equipped with an operating complex, oncology department, cardiology department, 24-hour emergency service and a day surgery unit.

The Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development (AKFED) provides an institutional umbrella for banks and insurance companies in eastern Africa, Central Asia and South Asia. These

project companies work on a commercial basis, but all profits are reinvested in further development. DCB Bank, founded in India in the 1930s, offers retail, commercial and consumer banking services in the SME and corporate segments of the economy. It has 312 state-of-the-art branches across many states in India.

The Diamond Jubilee is also an occasion for His Highness to recognise the friendship and longstanding support of leaders of state, government, and other partners in the work of the Imam, and to set the direction for the future. His Highness the Aga Khan arrived on 20 February in Delhi, and the following day, together with Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu, Vice President of India, inaugurated Sunder Nursery, a new 90-acre (36 hectare) city park in New Delhi. While in Delhi, His Highness the Aga Khan met with Honourable President of India Shri Ram Nath Kovind, Honourable Vice President of India Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu and Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.

He then travelled to Ahmedabad on the second leg of his visit, where he met with the Governor of Gujarat Shri Om Prakash Kohli, and the Chief Minister of Gujarat, Shri Vijay Rupani as well as members of his community.

On 26 February 2018, he travelled to Hyderabad where he met with the Governor of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh Sri E.S.L. Narasimhan and the Deputy Chief Minister of Telangana, Mr. Mohammad Mahmoud Ali.

In keeping with historic tradition and past practice, the Diamond Jubilee is also an occasion for the Ismaili community to offer their voluntary service and material gifts to His Highness as an expression of its love and appreciation. These gifts will be used by His Highness to underwrite significant development projects and initiatives of the Imam. Historically, such projects have included the establishment, amongst others, of schools and institutions of higher education, hospitals and poverty reduction programmes that serve the nation's development plan.

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The *Ismaili Imam* and the *Aga Khan Development Network* (AKDN) have a long and historic relationship with India, dating back 100 years to the first Aga Khan School in Mundra, Gujarat, which was established by the Aga Khan's grandfather, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah, in 1905.

Today, AKDN institutions in India work in close partnership with governments and communities to address a broad spectrum of development priorities in the country, including cultural revitalisation, education, health care, drinking water and sanitation, agriculture and the environment, rural development and access to finance for less privileged communities. These initiatives include rural support programmes that have benefitted over 1.5 million people in over 2,500 villages, the creation of 6,600 community institutions, urban and rural education programmes providing education to 8,500 students every year, a comprehensive sanitation initiative in six states, the Aga Khan Academy in Hyderabad, and a 162-bed multi-specialty acute care hospital in Mumbai. AKDN institutions in India have been widely recognised for their work, which is frequently replicated by governmental institutions as well as other development organizations.