

10th INTERNATIONAL KASBIT CONFERENCE

ON MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH (KICMR) 2026

AI, Geopolitics, and Sustainable Transformation in a Fragmented Global

Economy

CONFERENCE REPORT & KEY TAKEAWAYS

29th – 30th June 2026 | KASB Institute of Technology, Karachi

Prepared for Key Notes Speaker, all Participants, Session Chairs, and Guests

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Message from the Conference Patron

On behalf of the KASB Institute of Technology, I extend heartfelt gratitude to every keynote speaker, plenary speaker, session chair, moderator, author, and participant who made the 10th KICMR 2026 a resounding success. Over two days, 88 accepted papers were presented across 12 parallel sessions, alongside distinguished keynote addresses, plenary speeches, and a thought-provoking panel discussion.

This document has been compiled so that the essential ideas of the conference — its keynote insights, plenary takeaways, and the best papers recognized in each parallel session — remain accessible to all who took part. We hope it serves both as a record of our shared intellectual effort and as an invitation to continue this conversation at the 11th KICMR.

Prof. Dr. Fahim Qazi

Director, KASBIT | Conference Patron, 10th KICMR 2026

Conference at a Glance

- 2 days — Monday 29th & Tuesday 30th June 2026, at KASBIT, Karachi
- 88 accepted papers presented across 12 parallel sessions in 4 venues (Auditorium, Room 11, Room 12, Room 21)
- Inaugural session with Chief Guest Prof. Dr. Mujeebuddin Sahrai Memon (Vice Chancellor, SMIU) and keynote addresses by Rectors and Vice Chancellors of leading institutions
- Panel discussion: “Talent for a Fragmented World: Reimagining Academia's Role in Shaping Tomorrow's Corporate Leaders”
- Four plenary speeches on Day 2 covering geopolitics of rare earths, emerging research frontiers, AI in academia, and HEC policy directions
- Best Paper Award announced in every parallel session — 12 awards in total

Part I — Inaugural & Keynote Takeaways (Day 1)

Inaugural Session

The conference opened in the Auditorium with recitation of the Holy Quran and the National Anthem, followed by the welcome address of Prof. Dr. Fahim Qazi, Director KASBIT. The Chief Guest, Prof. Dr. Mujeebuddin Sahrai Memon, Vice Chancellor of Sindh Madressatul Islam University, graced the occasion. Keynote addresses were delivered by Prof. Dr. Farooq Cheema (Provost KSBL; Vice Chair, NBEAC–HEC), Prof. Dr. Tariq Rahim Soomro (Rector, IoBM), Prof. Dr. Vali Uddin (Vice Chancellor, UIT University), Prof. Dr. Zubair Ahmed Shaikh (President, MAJU), and Prof. Dr. Muhammad Aurangzeb Khan (Vice Chancellor, SBB Dewan University). The vote of thanks was offered by Mr. Nasir Ali Shah Bukhari, Chairman KASB Group, followed by the distribution of shields and certificates to keynote speakers.

Prof. Dr. Mujeebuddin Sahrai Memon — Chief Guest, Vice Chancellor, SMIU

Prof. Dr. Mujeebuddin Sahrai Memon began his address by thanking the organizers for the invitation, observing with satisfaction that the number of academic conferences being held across Pakistan has grown markedly in recent years — a trend he attributed to the advancement of IT, greater connectivity, and expanding professional networks in the post-COVID era.

He recalled an incident from early in his own academic career: when he joined as a lecturer, organizing a single conference required nine months to a full year of preparation, and such events were held only once every two to three years — almost exclusively by large public-sector universities. Today, by contrast, advances in IT and globalization have made it possible for private and smaller universities to organize conferences on a regular basis. He noted that when properly supported with resources and strategic vision, a single university may now hold multiple conferences within a single year; at SMIU, for instance, seven to eight international conferences have been organized within the last two to three years.

He also pointed to something he feels is increasingly missing from today's conferences: earlier conferences more consistently translated their research findings and outcomes into policy recommendations that were of direct use to strategic decision-makers. He stressed that it remains important — and, in his view, should be made mandatory — to share conference findings with industry and regulatory bodies so that research feeds into policy recommendation. He further recommended that large, well-resourced universities extend support to smaller universities in building their research capacity.

Policy Recommendations

- Conference outcomes and research findings should be systematically translated into policy recommendations for industry and regulatory stakeholders.
- Sharing conference findings with industry and regulatory bodies should be made a mandatory component of conference organization.
- Large, well-resourced universities should extend structural and mentorship support to smaller universities to strengthen their research capacity.

Prof. Dr. Tariq Rahim Soomro — Rector, Institute of Business Management (IoBM)

Prof. Dr. Tariq Rahim Soomro began his speech based on Responsible Faculty

Faculty Responsibilities

A university faculty member carries three fundamental responsibilities: teaching, research, and community engagement. Teaching remains the backbone of higher education, but traditional methods are

no longer sufficient — teachers must actively involve students in the learning process and emphasize critical thinking over rote memorization.

Curriculum & Academic Integrity

Curriculum forms the foundation of quality education and must be regularly reviewed and updated. Assessment strategies should avoid grade inflation and instead provide meaningful feedback on student competency, shifting the focus from marks to genuine knowledge acquisition.

Research with Purpose

Research should be impactful, ethical, and highly cited. Every researcher must ask: how will this research benefit society? Research must create genuine societal impact while maintaining unwavering ethical standards.

Education's Broader Purpose

Education should develop the whole student — civic sense, ethics, and personal responsibility — with lifelong learning embedded as a core institutional value.

Prof. Dr. Vali Uddin — Vice Chancellor, UIT University

From the Industrial Economy to the AI Economy

Universities face a fundamental challenge: transitioning from an Industrial Revolution framework to an AI Revolution paradigm, while simultaneously positioning themselves to compete internationally.

Assessment and Industry Alignment

HEC and national skill assessments have begun evaluating the quality of knowledge imparted to graduates. Universities can no longer assume that what they teach aligns with industry needs.

From Knowledge Provision to Innovation

Universities are knowledge providers — but are they producing innovators? Institutions must evolve beyond content delivery to actively foster innovation and entrepreneurial thinking, with clarity on the outcomes expected of final-year and capstone projects.

Institutional Change Requirements

This transformation demands fundamental change across three dimensions — faculty development, management practices, and institutional policy — including a clear understanding of the roles of the Board of Studies and Board of Faculty. The critical measure of research success remains its impact on society, supported by agility and international collaboration.

Panel Discussion — Talent for a Fragmented World

Reimagining Academia's Role in Shaping Tomorrow's Corporate Leaders | Moderator: Mr. Usama Iqbal, Director QEC, KASBIT

Panelists: Prof. Dr. Adnan Butt (Dean FMIS, KASBIT), Mr. Haris Hussain (General Manager HR & Admin, Puma Energy), Mr. Yaqoob (Director, SPAR), and Mr. Muhammad Owais Siddiqui (Marketing Manager, Flow HCM). The panel brought academia and industry to one table to examine how universities must reshape talent development for a fragmented, AI-driven corporate landscape — emphasizing employability, practical skills, and closer academia–industry linkages.

Part II — Plenary Session Takeaways (Day 2)

Dr. Waqar Akbar — Rare Earths, Geopolitics, and the New Global Order

Senior Lecturer & Editor in Chief, Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (UTeM), Malaysia

Rare Earth Elements: Foundation of Modern Technology

Rare earth elements — 17 metallic elements essential to smartphones, electric vehicles, and renewable energy systems — have become the 21st-century equivalent of 20th-century oil. The term “rare” is misleading: these elements exist abundantly in the earth's crust, but extracting and processing them requires expensive, technically complex operations.

Reserve Possession Is Not Economic Power

China holds 44 million tonnes of rare earth reserves — the largest globally — yet its dominance comes not from reserves but from controlling the supply chain: mining (60%), refining (90%), and magnet manufacturing (98%). Possession of reserves is irrelevant without the infrastructure to process them.

Asia's Central Role

The critical minerals economy is now centered in Asia. China leads mining and processing; Malaysia hosts advanced refining facilities; India and Vietnam supply feedstock; Myanmar provides ore; Indonesia controls broader critical mineral ecosystems. These interconnected value chains generate long-term competitive advantage.

Pakistan's Strategic Opportunity

Pakistan is not currently a significant rare earth player, though the government has launched a Rs950 million geological exploration project in Gilgit-Baltistan. Pakistan's opportunity lies not in becoming a major miner, but in developing processing capacity, research expertise, and strategic partnerships — the model Malaysia demonstrates as a critical processing and refining hub.

Key Messages

- Rare earth elements are strategically essential — controlling them means controlling access to future technologies.
- The real competition is over processing, manufacturing, and supply chains — not mining.
- Asia dominates the critical minerals economy; long-term competitiveness requires positioning within Asian value chains.

As Lee Kuan Yew observed, the size of a nation's resources is no longer the key to success — the ability to think, learn, and organize is. Pakistan's rare earth future depends on institutional capacity, not geological fortune.

Dr. Irfan Shakri — Emerging Research Frontiers in a Fragmented Global Economy

Senior Lecturer, RMIT University, Australia

Three Simultaneous Transformations

The world is experiencing three transformations at once: an AI revolution transforming production, decision-making, and innovation; geopolitical fragmentation reshaping trade, investment flows, and technology access; and a sustainability imperative forcing organizations to rethink long-term value creation. The central question: what are the most important research frontiers at the intersection of AI, geopolitics, and sustainability?

From Globalization to Strategic Fragmentation

Four forces define the shift: technology competition (national rivalries over AI leadership and semiconductor dominance), supply chain disruptions (reshoring, friend-shoring, and strategic decoupling), climate risks (physical and transition risks reshaping corporate strategy), and regulatory divergence (fragmented governance frameworks across jurisdictions).

AI as a General-Purpose Technology

AI accelerates R&D pipelines and patent quality, automates complex tasks across functions, improves forecasting and capital allocation, enhances early-warning and scenario analysis, and enables environmental monitoring and reporting.

Five Research Frontiers

- AI and Green Innovation — Does AI improve the impact of green patents, not just their volume? Can it accelerate diffusion of sustainable technologies and improve environmental performance beyond innovation outputs?
- AI and Corporate Governance — How does AI support or undermine board oversight? Can it reduce behavioral biases, or does it introduce new algorithmic biases? What governance mechanisms are needed for AI-assisted strategic decisions?
- AI and Investment Efficiency — How AI reshapes forecasting, capital allocation, and investment decisions under uncertainty.
- Geopolitical Risk and Corporate Strategy — Do firms increase or defer AI investment when geopolitical risk rises? Which capabilities build organizational resilience? Do board structures and ownership patterns buffer geopolitical shocks?
- AI and ESG Performance — Does AI produce measurable improvements in environmental and social outcomes, reduce greenwashing and improve disclosure quality, and help firms anticipate ESG controversies?

Concluding Reflections

AI, geopolitics, and sustainability are not separate challenges — they are interconnected forces reshaping organizational behavior, strategic decision-making, and long-term value creation. Future research must be interdisciplinary, policy-relevant, globally aware, and focused on sustainable long-term value rather than short-term efficiency.

Prof. Dr. Ahmed Saeed Minhas — AI in Academia: Adoption Without Guidance

Vice Chancellor, DHA Suffa University, Karachi

The Reality of AI Adoption

A major international survey found that 89% of university students globally use AI tools for academic work, yet fewer than 12% received any formal guidance on using them effectively — a profound institutional failure.

Genuine Benefits — and a Critical Danger

AI has genuinely democratized intellectual access: comprehensive literature overviews are available in minutes, particularly valuable where library access is uneven. But when students ask AI to draft research proposals, they skip the most intellectually formative part of academic training — the struggle to formulate meaningful questions. Recent submissions reveal a troubling pattern: grammatically perfect yet intellectually hollow work.

The Epistemological and Ethical Dimension

AI systems are trained primarily on Western knowledge traditions. Students accepting AI-generated analysis of Pakistan's foreign policy consume a filtered, algorithmically mediated version of reality that may not reflect their own context or ethical frameworks.

Five Concrete Recommendations

- Students must understand that AI does not know anything — it predicts patterns.
- Universities must develop clear, published policies on AI use.
- Faculty development is non-negotiable.
- Assessment must be redesigned to verify student learning.
- Ethics should run as a thread through the entire curriculum.

Mr. Sulaiman Ahmad — The HEC Mandate: AI Literacy as a Universal Requirement

Regional In-charge (Karachi, Sindh), Higher Education Commission, Karachi

Mandatory AI Literacy from Fall 2026

Beginning in fall 2026, all universities must implement a mandatory three-credit-hour course on AI literacy for all students across all domains — a fundamental institutional shift recognizing AI literacy as essential as mathematical literacy.

Evolution of HEC Policy

HEC began introducing AI literacy in 2024 and, by 2025, launched a comprehensive framework for ethical AI use built on three principles: transparency, informed consent, and impact awareness. Every university must establish a formal committee for ethical AI use, develop plagiarism and usage policies, and conduct mandatory workshops for faculty and students.

Market-Driven Curriculum and Quality Standards

HEC's skills testing found significant misalignment between what universities teach and what employers need — leading HEC to stop admissions to computer science programs in 44 universities not meeting quality standards. Critical and analytical thinking, identified by the World Economic Forum as the most essential skill in an AI-augmented world, must be explicitly taught and assessed across all disciplines.

Workforce and Infrastructure

Pakistan aims to produce one million IT and AI professionals by 2030. HEC is supporting faculty development — around 60,000 teachers currently require education about AI and its pedagogical implications — alongside accelerated digitalization of delivery, administration, and assessment systems.

Part III — Parallel Sessions & Best Paper Awards

A Best Paper Award was announced in each of the 12 parallel sessions, recognizing outstanding scholarship and presentation. Session details (venue, theme, chairs) are listed below, followed by a single consolidated list of all Best Paper Award winners.

Day 1 — Session A

Venue: Auditorium | Theme: Finance, Economics & Geopolitics

Session Chair: Dr. Aitzaz Alias Sarang (IBA Karachi)

Session Chair: Dr. Faisal Sultan Qadri (KASBIT)

Session Co-Chair: Dr. Seema Waseem (Moderator), KASBIT

Day 1 — Session B

Venue: Room 11 | Theme: HR, Management & Organizational Behavior

Session Chair: Prof. Dr. Ume Sumaya (IUBS)

Session Chair: Dr. Ume Amen (Dow University)

Session Co-Chair: Dr. Mahpara Ahmed (Moderator), KASBIT

Day 1 — Session C

Venue: Room 12 | Theme: Marketing, Consumer Behavior & Digital

Session Chair: Dr. Adnan Bashir (IoBM)

Session Chair: Dr. Waqas Rana (IUBS)

Session Co-Chair: Ms. Huma Abubakar (Moderator), KASBIT

Day 1 — Session D

Venue: Room 21 | Theme: Supply Chain, Operations & Sustainability

Session Chair: Prof. Dr. Amir Feroz Shamsi (Bahria University)

Session Chair: Dr. Mirza Amin ul Haq (Ziauddin University)

Session Co-Chair: Mr. Eesar Khan (Moderator), KASBIT

Day 2 (Block 1) — Session A

Venue: Auditorium | Theme: AI, Technology & Computer Science

Session Chair: Dr. Asif Mansure (NUST)

Session Chair: Prof. Dr. Shafiq-ur-Rehman Massan (KASBIT)

Session Co-Chair: Mr. Basheerullah (Moderator), KASBIT

Day 2 (Block 1) — Session B

Venue: Room 11 | Theme: Corporate Governance, ESG & Sustainability

Session Chair: Prof. Dr. Imam Uddin (IoBM)

Session Chair: Dr. Saifullah (Ziauddin University)

Session Co-Chair: Ms. Nousheen Abbas Naqvi (Moderator), KASBIT

Day 2 (Block 1) — Session C

Venue: Room 12 | Theme: AI & Business Ethics (Corporate Cases)

Session Chair: Prof. Dr. Shahzad Nasim (BNBWU)

Session Co-Chair: Dr. Imran Ahmed Shah (SALU Khairpur)

Session Co-Chair: Mr. Muhammad Bilal Raees (Moderator), KASBIT

Day 2 (Block 1) — Session D

Venue: Room 21 | Theme: Corporate Case Studies — Tech & FMCG

Session Chair: Prof. Dr. Samina Riaz (Bahria University)

Session Chair: Dr. Kashif Arif (IoBM)

Session Co-Chair: Ms. Arhama Moten (Moderator), KASBIT

Day 2 (Block 2) — Session A

Venue: Auditorium | Theme: Capstone Projects — HR & Management

Session Chair: Dr. Muzammil Ghayas (IQRA University)

Session Co-Chair: Ms. Huma AbuBakar (KASBIT)

Session Co-Chair: Mr. Sohail Iqbal (Moderator), KASBIT

Day 2 (Block 2) — Session B

Venue: Room 11 | Theme: Capstone Projects — Marketing & Consumer

Session Chair: Dr. Asad Ali (SZABIST)

Session Co-Chair: Ms. Nousheen Abbas Naqvi (KASBIT)

Session Co-Chair: Mr. Zain ul Abedeyin (Moderator), KASBIT

Day 2 (Block 2) — Session C

Venue: Room 12 | Theme: Capstone Projects — Operations & SCM

Session Chair: Prof. Dr. Nadeem Syed (KASBIT)

Session Chair: Dr. Faisal Sultan (KASBIT)

Session Co-Chair: Mr. Abdul Basit (Moderator), KASBIT

Day 2 (Block 2) — Session D

Venue: Room 21 | Theme: Capstone Projects — Digital & HR

Session Chair: Dr. Adnan Pitafi (MUEST, Jamshoro) / Dr. Mahpara Ahmed (KASBIT)

Session Co-Chair: Ms. Sanam Iqbal (KASBIT)

Session Co-Chair: Ms. Samreen Nasir (Moderator), KASBIT

Consolidated List of Best Paper Awards

Paper ID	Best Paper Title	Author(s)
KICMR-26-046	Impact of Herding Behavior in PSX with Relation to Foreign Investor Portfolio Investment	Arslan (University of Karachi)
KICMR-26-002	Measuring the Impact of Financial Benefits on Well-Being and Turnover Intentions of Gen Z Employees Moderated by Leader Emotional Expression	Nazia Abdul Aziz (IOBM)
KICMR-26-080	Lack of Financial Reporting & KPIs — Rahmat Shipping (Pvt) Limited	Faizan et al. (KASBIT — Capstone)
KICMR-26-009	AI for Sustainable E-Commerce: Bridging the Trust Gap	Munuzza Noor (KASBIT)
KICMR-26-021	Impact of AI Job Replacement Anxiety on Employee Performance: Pakistan Digital Transformation Era	Arisha Shakeel (Jinnah University for Women)
KICMR-26-001	Mapping the Evolution, Productivity, and Intellectual Structure of Islamic Finance Research: A Scopus-Based Bibliometric Analysis (1997–2025)	Dr. Nadeem (UCP)
KICMR-26-069	The Algorithmic Nudge: How AI Intersects with Behavioral Biases in Retail Investment via Digital Platforms	Sanam Iqbal (KASBIT)
KICMR-26-012	Intrinsic, Implicit or Imagined Student Learning Resilience: SDGs in a HEI Program	Hasan
KICMR-26-056	ACT Polyols Pvt Ltd — Employee Retention Study	M. Maroof Khan
KICMR-26-084	Managing Employee Absenteeism for Better Retention — Ibex Pakistan	Sania Hanif et al. (KASBIT)
KICMR-26-087	Challenges in Maintaining Turnaround Time in Teleradiology Workflow — Mars Healthcare	Sunny Ali et al. (KASBIT)

Part IV — Closing

Synthesis: A Vision for Higher Education's Future

Taken together, the keynote and plenary presentations of the 10th KICMR reveal a coherent vision for the future of higher education:

- Prof. Dr. Tariq Rahim Soomro emphasized balancing teaching, research, and community engagement while preparing students for civic and ethical responsibility.
- Prof. Dr. Vali Uddin insisted universities must transition to the AI era while producing innovators, not merely knowledge providers.
- Dr. Waqar Akbar showed that geopolitical power flows to countries controlling supply chains and possessing institutional capacity.
- Dr. Irfan Shakri mapped the research frontiers where AI, geopolitics, and sustainability intersect — and called for rigorous, interdisciplinary, policy-relevant scholarship.
- Prof. Dr. Ahmed Saeed Minhas insisted that technology must serve human intellectual development, not replace it.
- Mr. Sulaiman Ahmad translated this vision into concrete action: mandatory AI literacy, ethical frameworks, and curriculum redesign.

Together, these presentations outline a transformation that is at once technological, pedagogical, ethical, and geopolitical. Higher education must evolve rapidly and deliberately, with clear ethical grounding. Institutional capacity, critical thinking, and strategic positioning matter more than possession of resources.

Acknowledgements

The organizing committee gratefully acknowledges the Chief Guest, keynote and plenary speakers, panelists, session chairs and co-chairs, moderators, reviewers, volunteers, and the faculty and staff of KASBIT whose dedication made the 10th KICMR 2026 possible. Special thanks to all authors and presenters — from Pakistan and abroad, on campus and online — whose scholarship formed the heart of this conference.

Looking Ahead

Authors of accepted papers are encouraged to consider extending their work for submission to the KASBIT Business Journal and the KICMR proceedings. We look forward to welcoming you again at the 11th KICMR in 2027. For queries and correspondence, please contact conference@kasbit.edu.pk.

— End of Conference Report | 10th KICMR 2026, KASBIT Karachi —