

dear residents

Waking Up To Joy

July 12, 2026

Dear Residents,

With many of you following the FIFA World Cup over the past several weeks, I have enjoyed seeing the excitement it has generated. Between admissions, rounds, consults, and clinic, you've managed to keep up with scores, celebrate dramatic finishes, and debate which team will ultimately lift the trophy. As we pause between the quarterfinals and the semifinals, it reminded me of another World Cup that I experienced very differently.

In 1992, [Pakistan](#) won the Cricket World Cup in Melbourne, Australia.

I was in Houston then, in residency training. It was my chief resident year and one of our tasks was to staff the LBJ Hospital ED at night. By the next evening, I had been up for about 36 hours. I watched a few hours of the final, wanting desperately to stay awake, but eventually sleep won. When I woke up, I learned that Pakistan had won. It was a happy day indeed.

For those of us from Pakistan, that victory remains one of the great sporting memories of our lives. [Imran Khan](#), already one of the greatest all-rounders in cricket history, led a team that had nearly been eliminated early in the tournament. He called them “cornered tigers,” and somehow, they became exactly that. They fought back, believed in themselves, and won the World Cup. It was especially significant because the World Cup victory came against a backdrop of national uncertainty, urban violence in Karachi, civil-military tension, and a fragile elected government.

I missed the moment itself because I was a resident.

That sentence captures something about medical training in that era. Life kept happening, but residency often came first. Weddings, holidays, family events, championships, sleep. Everything had to fit around the demands of the hospital. We accepted this as normal, even when it was not always humane.

That is one reason I smile when I see you tracking World Cup scores on your phones, watching highlights between responsibilities, and staying connected to a world beyond the hospital. This year's FIFA World Cup has been easier to follow than any tournament I remember. Last Sunday, I watched the exciting Mexico-England Match on a flight. Live scores, video clips, replays, group tables, and commentary are instantly available. Even if you miss the match, the match does not entirely leave you behind.

There is also a lovely irony for Pakistanis. Pakistan is not in the FIFA World Cup, but the world cup ball itself has been [manufactured](#) in Sialkot, Pakistan. In some small but meaningful way, Pakistan is still present on the field in every single match.

We do not always get to stand in the center of the celebration. Sometimes we contribute quietly. Sometimes we are in the background. Sometimes we are asleep when history happens. But our work still matters. The hands that make the ball are part of the game. The residents who admit the patient, call the consultant, update the family, complete the discharge, and hand off safely are part of something larger than any single visible moment.

Residency will still ask a lot of you. There will still be missed dinners, delayed texts, tired mornings, and moments when the rest of the world seems to be moving on without you. But I hope training today leaves more room for you to remain connected to your families, your countries, your teams, your histories, and yourselves.

I am grateful that some parts of residency have changed. I am grateful that we are asking harder questions about fatigue, handoffs, supervision, and humanity. I am grateful that you can follow the FIFA World Cup more easily than I could follow Pakistan's great cricket triumph in 1992.

And I hope, whether your team wins or loses, that you find joy where you can. Sometimes it comes in real time. Sometimes you wake up to it.

Sincerely,

Dino Kazi