

from the desk of the
Head of Academy

4 April 2025



Dear Parents,

Before the age of streaming platforms and high-octane video games, children like me grew up on a diet of *Tom and Jerry* cartoons. My father owned a collection of these on original 35mm film reels. I have happy memories of those silent images projected onto our living room wall. We would watch the same films over and over again, laughing as Tom tried to hit Jerry in the face with a frying pan or drop an anvil on his head from the ceiling! Jerry managed to outwit him every time with a cheeky grin and a perfectly timed escape.

These days, children are growing up in a far more intense media landscape. The violence is often more realistic and far more immersive – especially in video games, where children are not just watching but actively participating in simulated aggression. Should we be worried?

The experts certainly agree that we should be concerned. Professor Craig Anderson, a psychologist from Iowa State University, is renowned for his research into aggression and the effects of media violence. His findings are clear: repeated exposure to violent media increases the likelihood of aggressive thoughts and behaviours in children. According to Professor Anderson, this can even reduce a child's sensitivity to the suffering of others. This isn't to say that every child who plays a combat game or watches violent movies becomes aggressive themselves, but the risk increases – especially in the absence of supportive adult guidance.

Other experts, like neuroscientist Dr. Daniel Siegel, have explained how our brains are shaped by repeated experience. If those repeated experiences involve conflict being resolved through violence, without empathy or reflection, children may develop a skewed moral compass.

The real danger is not just in the content but in children navigating it alone. As Jonathan Haidt, author of *The Anxious Generation*, puts it, "*We decided the real world was so full of dangers that children should not be allowed to explore it without adult supervision... At the same time.....we have left children free to wander through the Wild West of the virtual world, where threats to children abound.*" Haidt's warning highlights a paradox: while we've become more protective of children in the physical world, we've left them to navigate the virtual world – often far more dangerous – without support.

So, how can we offer that support, without turning into digital gatekeepers? Here are a few simple suggestions:

Watch together: Find ways to share occasional screen time together. A Netflix series or a trending YouTube clip can open the door to meaningful conversations. When something intense or morally grey happens, you might casually ask: "What do you think about how that character handled it?" or "Would you have made the same choice?" This allows sensitive or disturbing content to be reflected on in a supportive way. Some stories that include violence can actually help children grapple with big ideas - justice, courage, sacrifice – if they are framed thoughtfully and discussed together.

Balance the Narrative: Young people are drawn to drama, conflict and action. It's part of exploring risk and identity. But if their screen diet is largely made up of violence or competitive gaming, they may start to see the world in extremes. Adults can encourage children to access a broader range of stories – especially ones that present emotional depth and a more balanced picture of human experience.

Set Limits: Agree together on what kinds of content are appropriate and why – not just based on age ratings but how it aligns with your family's values. If something feels inappropriate or disturbing, be honest about your concerns.

Offer Alternatives: Offering children alternatives isn't about banning screens. It's about expanding their horizons and nudging them out of the virtual world. Encourage creative outlets: writing, photography, coding, sport, volunteering or just time with friends in real-world settings. These experiences counterbalance the fast-paced, often superficial rewards of screen media.

The real question isn't whether children will encounter violence in media. They will. The more important question is: Who is helping them make sense of it? That's where we come in - as parents and educators. Our role isn't to shield children from every challenge but to walk alongside them as they learn to navigate a complicated world – both real and virtual. When we ask questions, share perspectives and reflect together, we open up a space into which they can grow.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan Long". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name written in a single continuous line.

Dr Jonathan Long

THIS WEEK'S NEWS



IN WITH A SPLASH AT THE JUNIOR SCHOOL SWIMMING GALA!

One of the highlights of the school year is the Junior School Swimming Gala – and this year's event certainly lived up to expectations! At the Academy, swimming is much more than just a sport. It's a vital life skill that builds water confidence, physical fitness and emotional resilience from an early age. For our young swimmers, the pool becomes a place that combines challenge and fun. This week, students from Grades 1 to 5 took to the water with great enthusiasm, showing off the progress they've made throughout the year. Colourful swimsuits, bright smiles, and spirited cheers gave the day a festive feel. Many thanks go to the swimming coaches and PE team for preparing the children so well for the event and organising a successful gala.





NIZAM HOUSE TRIUMPHS IN SENIOR SCHOOL GALA

This week's Senior School Swimming Gala was a festive time of high-energy competition and excitement as each of the four Houses battled it out in this much-anticipated annual event! An enthusiastic crowd added to a joyful atmosphere. With some very close finishes, Nizam House triumphed with strong performances across the age groups. Our campus includes a magnificent swimming pool and a diving pool. These facilities allow our students to develop their swimming skills to a high standard. We are proud that our swimming team performs exceptionally well in inter-school competitions.





GRADE 1 LIGHTS UP WITH HANDS-ON DISCOVERY

Enquiry-based learning and critical thinking are at the heart of the Academy's approach to education. From as early as Grade 1, students are encouraged to ask questions, explore ideas, and develop a problem-solving mindset that will serve them well throughout their lives. Recently, our Grade 1 students stepped into the Senior School Science Lab for a hands-on exploration of light. Guided by Ms Smriti, they discovered that light travels in a straight line and can be blocked, reflected, or refracted. Using mirrors, they observed how light bounces off surfaces; with prisms, they saw how it bends and separates into a beautiful spectrum of colours. These interactive experiments deepened the students' understanding of scientific concepts and sharpened their observational and analytical skills. The room buzzed with curiosity and excitement as students experienced the joy of learning through discovery.



A FOND FAREWELL: CELEBRATING THE SPIRIT OF EXCHANGE

After an enriching 11 weeks, the Exchange Programme drew to a close as 22 students from the Maputo and Mombasa Academies prepared to return home. To mark the occasion, Grade 9 students hosted a special farewell assembly. The event celebrated the deep friendships that had formed and also the Academy's commitment to pluralism and diversity. Through shared experiences, students discovered the richness of different cultures and traditions - and how much they have in common. The assembly was a reminder that when young people come together in the spirit of openness and mutual respect, lifelong connections are made. As the gathering came to a close, emotions ran high. With teary eyes and smiling faces, students embraced and exchanged goodbyes - promising to carry these friendships and memories with them, no matter the distance. While this year's exchange programme has come to an end, the bonds created will endure - a living reflection of the Academy's mission to nurture compassionate global citizens who celebrate difference and build bridges across borders.



CELEBRATING UGADI – A MORNING OF RENEWAL AND REFLECTION

On the occasion of Ugadi, a group of residential students, accompanied by dorm parents and residential staff, visited the nearby Maheswaram Temple. Ugadi, celebrated in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Karnataka, marks the beginning of the Hindu lunisolar calendar month of *Chaitra* and the arrival of spring. This is a season of renewal, hope, and fresh beginnings. Surrounded by the temple's serene atmosphere and devotional chants, the group enjoyed a moment of reflection and connection.



EID: A CELEBRATION OF UNITY AND GRATITUDE

Eid is one of the most significant festivals in the Islamic calendar, marking the end of Ramadan. It is a time to express gratitude, extend generosity, and deepen social bonds. For some of our students, the day began with an early morning gathering at the *Jamathkhana*. Following the prayers, a special lunch was arranged on campus, featuring a spread of traditional Eid delicacies. The dining hall buzzed with laughter and conversation as the community came together in celebration. At a school like this, such occasions are more than celebrations - they are part of a rich, lived experience of religious and cultural learning. By honouring diverse traditions in a spirit of respect and inclusion, the Academy helps students grow as compassionate, globally-minded individuals



GRADE 5 PREPARES FOR PYP EXHIBITION

The PYP Exhibition is a culminating project in the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme. It provides students with an opportunity to explore a topic they are passionate about, conduct in-depth research, and demonstrate the skills, knowledge, and attitudes they have developed throughout their years in the PYP. It is both a celebration of learning and a rite of passage as students prepare to transition to Middle Years. Our Grade 5 students are now in the midst of their PYP Exhibition journey and are actively engaged in deepening their enquiries and preparing to present their learning. Students have been collaborating with their language teachers to create materials in their mother tongues, allowing them to express their understanding authentically. They have also been designing and building models that represent key aspects of their inquiry. In addition, the students are developing digital presentations to showcase the findings from their research. All groups have also designed surveys, enabling them to gather valuable primary data relevant to their exhibition topics. It is wonderful to see the

curiosity and commitment our young learners are showing as they move closer to their final exhibition. We also take this opportunity to remind you that the Grade 5 PYP Exhibition will be held on 18 April 2025.



2025 UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS UPDATE

With over 700 applications submitted to universities across 17 countries, this year's university admissions process includes some notable successes. To date, approximately 270 acceptances have been received, including from universities in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and India, as well as offers from Spain, China, Italy, Ireland, Hong Kong, Japan, the Netherlands, Singapore and the UAE. The list includes prestigious institutions such as University College London (UK), Duke Kunshan University (China), New York University (USA), University of Washington (USA), the University of Edinburgh (UK), University of Amsterdam (Netherlands), University of Toronto (Canada) and Monash University (Australia). The Class of 2025 has already been awarded nearly USD 6 million in scholarships, including full-ride, full-tuition, and partial awards – a testament to their academic and extracurricular strengths. The quality of admissions is equally impressive:

- 11 students have been accepted into universities ranked within the top 50 of the QS World University Rankings
- 36 into universities ranked 51–100
- 18 into universities ranked 101–150
- 21 into universities ranked 151–200

There has also been significant success in highly competitive Indian university admissions for Indian passport holders. Students have secured places at leading institutions such as Ashoka University, Plaksha University, Azim Premji University, Shiv Nadar University and others — reflecting the growing appeal and prestige of top Indian universities. As decisions continue to roll in, we expect further acceptances and scholarship offers in the weeks ahead. The Class of 2025 is already demonstrating a truly global impact and an inspiring trajectory.



SAT TESTING AT THE AGA KHAN ACADEMY HYDERABAD!

We are pleased to confirm that the Academy will be hosting SAT testing on 3 May and 7 June 2025. Our recently authorised testing centre is open to students from the Academy but also from other schools in the area. The SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test) is a globally recognised college entrance exam widely used for admissions to universities in the United States and in many other countries. It assesses students' readiness for university-level work and is a requirement for many undergraduate admissions, particularly for international applicants.

Important Dates and details:

- May Test: Registration deadline is 18 April 2025
- June Test: Registration deadline is 22 May 2025
- Centre Name: Aga Khan Academy Hyderabad
- Centre Number: 63827

Please feel free to share this information with friends and family who may be interested in taking the SAT. We look forward to welcoming students from across the community to our open testing centre!



LEARNING ACROSS SCHOOLS: A WARM WELCOME TO COCHIN PYP TEAM

This week, the Junior School was delighted to host the PYP team from Cochin International School, including their PYP Coordinator, Ms Remi Rajan. The visiting team engaged in conversations and meaningful exchanges with the Academy's pedagogical leadership, including

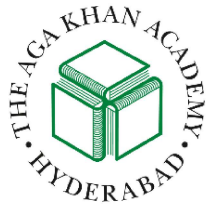
Junior School Principal Ms Latha and PYP Coordinator Mr Abhimanyu. As part of their visit, they observed specialist lessons, visited classrooms, interacted with homeroom teachers, and participated in a session led by the Teacher Preparation Programme (TPP) Institute. The experience offered valuable insights into best practices and provided an opportunity to immerse themselves in the Academy's distinctive ethos and classroom culture.

“One of the central precepts of the International Baccalaureate Programme is to honour world-class standards, while also respecting cultural diversity. In this respect, its approach mirrors that of the Aga Khan Academies – to help students combine a cosmopolitan spirit on the one hand, with a strong sense of cultural identity on the other.”

His Late Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV
Kampala, Uganda, 22 August 2007



THE AGA KHAN ACADEMY
HYDERABAD



from the desk of the
Head of Academy

11 April 2025



This week, we welcomed back our Grade 9 students who have been on exchange at the Aga Khan Academy in Mombasa.

Dear Parents,

Watching the news this week has been unsettling. Sweeping new tariffs have sent shockwaves through global markets, disrupted trade and left many wondering what the economic and political fallout might be. It's one more reminder – as if we needed it – that our world is unpredictable.

As a parent, you've probably felt a familiar knot in your stomach. *What kind of future are we sending our children into? How do we prepare them for a world that can shift overnight?*

I believe the answer lies in offering young people three essential gifts. These are the hallmarks of a truly good education. In a world that is shifting beneath our feet, this remains the surest way we can prepare young people for a future that often feels uncertain.

The first gift of a good education is to be **well-qualified**. This is what we usually think of when we talk about education - developing the intellect: the ability to think deeply, reason clearly, and make sense of complexity. As His Highness the Aga Khan IV put it, *"The ability to make judgements that are grounded in solid information and employ careful analysis, should be one of the most important goals for any educational endeavour."*

In an age of information overload, our children don't just need facts – they need frameworks to make sense of those facts. Through the IB curriculum and the Aga Khan Academy Strands, we nurture learners who are reflective inquirers and thinkers - students who know how to question, how to evaluate and how to form their understanding. That's why we take our academic programme seriously and why we expect our students to aim high and do well.

The second gift that a good education should grant young people is to be **well-rounded**. At the Academy, this is not an optional extra – it is central to the education we offer. It is about the breadth of experience students gain beyond the classroom: in sports, service, internships, outdoor challenges and leadership roles. These are the places where young people discover their strengths and develop the confidence that comes from being stretched.

It is through our residential, experiential, and enrichment programmes that students develop the grit and grace they will need to navigate an unpredictable future. Sometimes, this involves discomfort and hardship. At other times, students discover that personal choice must give way to the well-being of the community. And in a diverse environment like

ours, they learn to relate respectfully and meaningfully to peers whose cultures, beliefs, social positions, and preferences may differ from their own.

It is only when young people are stretched beyond their comfort zone and when they face real challenges that they build the inner resources that matter most, especially resilience and grit. These qualities aren't formed in moments of ease but through effort and persistence. A well-rounded and holistic education like ours helps young people develop the kind of character that stands firm when the future is uncertain or threatening.

The third gift of a truly great education is to be **well-grounded**. This means to find reliable values and to live by them. In an unpredictable world, values provide a moral compass, guiding young people to make wise decisions and act with integrity. But values aren't simply delivered in a lesson; more often, they are caught, not taught – absorbed through the daily atmosphere and ethos of a school, through adults who model kindness and respect, and through a positive peer culture.

Values are like habits of the heart. They are cultivated slowly and quietly. They take shape when a student sees a peer act with kindness, in the integrity of a teacher who keeps a promise, or in the courage it takes to admit a mistake and make it right. Over time, these moments create patterns that shape a child's sense of what is right and what is worth standing up for.

The real measure of a great education is not only what a student knows, but who they become. And in a world that is increasingly unpredictable, this kind of education becomes even more urgent. We cannot prepare children for every challenge they will face, but we can help them develop the inner compass they will need to navigate their way through chaos and complexity. This is why an Academy education sets out to graduate young people who are **well-qualified, well-rounded and well-grounded**.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jonathan Long". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jonathan" and last name "Long" clearly distinguishable.

Dr Jonathan Long

THIS WEEK'S NEWS



EXPLORING NEW HORIZONS: STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

Our Exchange Programme students have returned from the Aga Khan Academy in Mombasa, after an enriching experience filled with cultural learning, new friendships and a unique educational environment. Aimee and Koushik, two of our Grade 9 students who went on exchange, shared their perspectives on the time they spent in Kenya.

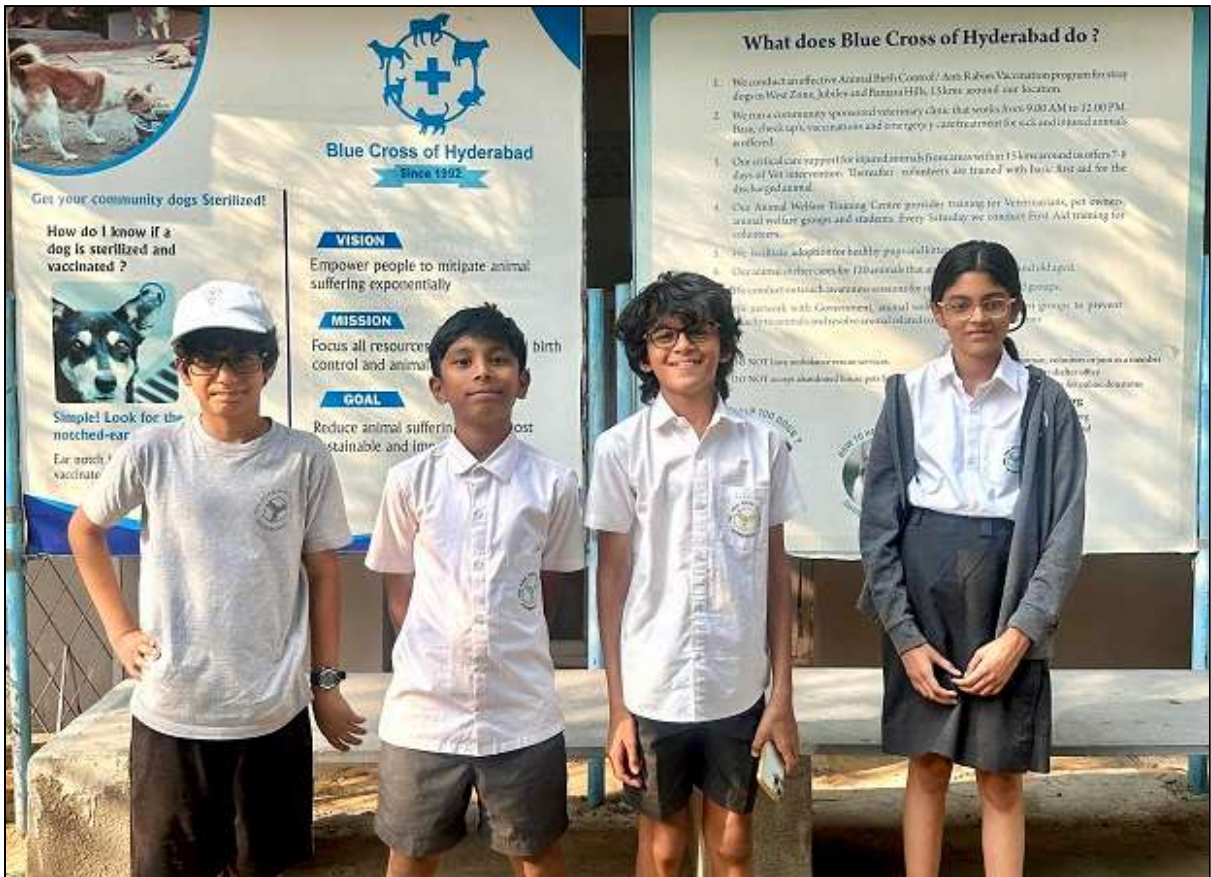
Koushik

Koushik described feeling at home upon arrival, with the city's warm vibe and landscape reminding him of Hyderabad's outskirts. Adjusting to dorm life and longer class durations was a new experience, but he quickly adapted. He enjoyed friendly teachers, peer-led learning, and unique sports like diamond cricket and netball. Highlights of his stay included exploring the beautiful city of Mombasa, participating in an inter-school chess tournament and securing first place in his first-ever Baseball tournament. One of the most meaningful values Koushik learned at the Mombasa Academy was the importance of greeting and showing respect to one another - a non-negotiable practice deeply embedded in the school culture. It left a lasting impression on him and it's a value he says he will carry with him forever.

Aimee

Aimee shared that her experience in Mombasa shifted her worldview and broadened her perspective. Living on campus helped her embrace independence and adapt to new routines, like early morning exercise, which, though out of her comfort zone, became something she truly enjoyed. She appreciated the friendly people, engaging lessons and the slower yet more independent learning style. In her advice to future exchange students,

Aimee says, “Be open to wherever you're going. Everyone has unique experiences, so go without expectations - your personality will shape your journey in meaningful ways.”



LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

In preparation for their PYP Exhibition, Grade 5 students went on a series of field trips to collect primary data and explore their inquiries in real-world settings. These experiences helped them observe, ask meaningful questions and make deeper connections with their topics. The *Artistic Buzz* group visited Shrishti Art Gallery, where they explored different art forms and discovered how art is part of our everyday lives. The *Animal Saviours* went to Blue Cross, Hyderabad, learning that caring for animals involves both compassion and responsibility. The *Wilderness Protectors* had a day out at the Nehru Zoological Park, leading to thoughtful conversations about conservation and ethical treatment of animals. Back on campus, the *Planet Replenishers* and *Environment Protectors* attended a powerful session on how the Academy promotes sustainability and supports the Sustainable Development Goals of the country. These hands-on experiences bring learning to life and foster the students' growth as powerful thinkers and future inquirers.



GUEST SPEAKER SESSIONS ENRICH PYP EXHIBITION JOURNEY

Grade 5 students engaged in enriching guest speaker sessions to gather valuable primary data from real-world experts. Each group connected with professionals related to their area of inquiry. The *Wellness Warriors* met an oncologist, an Ayurvedic doctor, a psychologist and a Conscious Parenting Coach. The *Technovators* learned about the evolution of technology from a former software engineer. The *Sports Busters* were inspired by a professional golfer. *Planet Replenishers* and *Environment Protectors* explored sustainability with environmental activists. The *Artistic Buzz* gained insights from an arts department head and an art critic. Finally, the *Animal Saviours* and *Wilderness Protectors* learned about animal care from a canine behaviourist. These sessions sparked curiosity, deepened understanding and supported meaningful student-led inquiry.



BEST OUT OF THE WASTE

An imaginative initiative is underway at the organic farm, where 80% of the fencing has been completed using scrap materials like rusted pipes, tin lids, rubber sheets and more. This sustainable project, designed to protect trees from porcupines, has demonstrated commendable teamwork among our residential students, carpenters, masons and gardeners. The project has provided a rich learning experience in creativity, planning and collaboration. Staff members are now encouraged to contribute reusable waste materials to support this eco-friendly mission and help transform the farm into a model of sustainability and innovation.



CURIOUS MINDS

As part of our ongoing unit on Exploration under the transdisciplinary theme “Where we are in place and time”, Grade 3 students went on a field trip to the Birla Science Museum in Hyderabad on Thursday. This iconic institution, known for its engaging exhibits and educational value, provided the perfect setting for students to experience the spirit of scientific discovery. The museum houses a wide range of galleries, including sections on space science, physics, archaeology, and human anatomy. Our students explored the interactive science exhibits, observed working models of basic machines, and experienced optical illusions that sparked their curiosity. A visit to the space gallery, which features satellite models and information about India’s space missions, inspired thoughtful conversations about human curiosity and the drive to explore beyond our planet. Students also had the opportunity to walk through the dinosaur exhibit and the archaeology section, where ancient artefacts connected their learning to real-world timelines and civilisations. The day was filled with moments of inquiry and reflection and students returned to school with their imaginations stirred and a renewed sense of themselves as young explorers.



GRADE 4 ASSEMBLY CELEBRATES 'NEW BEGINNINGS'

This week, Grade 4 students led a special assembly titled 'New Beginnings'. Through engaging storytelling, they took the audience on a journey across India and beyond - celebrating Vishu in Kerala, Poila Boishakh in Bengal, Puthandu in Tamil Nadu, Bohag Bihu in Assam and Easter from around the world. Each festival beautifully reflected themes of renewal, gratitude and togetherness. The assembly served as a joyful reminder of our shared human spirit and the relevance of the AK Curricular Strands – Cultures and Pluralism – in our lives. The assembly concluded with a touching message: "No matter where we are, we share joy, light and love."



GALLOPING TO VICTORY

We are delighted to share that our young equestrians, Anjani and Aashri of Grade 3, made a strong impression at the Delhi Horse Show 2025. Anjani earned 2nd place in Hacks and 5th in Dressage, while Aashri took 3rd place in Hacks. Demonstrating excellent teamwork, the pair also placed 4th in the group Dressage event. Their dedication, discipline and love for the sport have brought pride to our Academy. We extend our warmest congratulations to both riders and wish them continued success in the saddle.



EMPOWERING EDUCATORS

We were pleased to welcome Ms Antoinette, Teacher-Coach with the Aga Khan Academies, to our Hyderabad campus as part of her ongoing work from the Aga Khan Centre in London. Her visit focused on strengthening the Teacher Preparation Programme and leading professional development sessions for faculty. Ms Antoinette facilitated engaging workshops on Universal Design for Learning, classroom presence, and inclusive practices - helping early-career teachers turn theory into effective classroom strategies. She also contributed to forward-looking discussions on the integration of AI in teaching and collaborated on lesson planning aligned with the Aga Khan Curricular Strands. Designed to equip educators with practical tools and fresh insights, her sessions were both energising and empowering. A particularly special moment was reconnecting with students she had previously taught in Mombasa, adding a personal and heartwarming touch to her visit. We are grateful to Ms Antoinette for her expertise and dedication, and we look forward to more enriching teacher development sessions during her time with us.



TPP INSTITUTE GRADUATION

Today marked the culmination of the two-week Teacher Preparation Programme Institute conducted by our Centre for Educational Research Innovation and Training (CERIT). We congratulate all 18 students who completed the programme. This training is designed to provide them with the skills and understanding they need to work as a teacher within the Aga Khan Academies. This 75-hour training course is recognised as a Professional Development Qualification by Cambridge University. From this cohort, a smaller selection of participants moves to the next training phase during which they will spend eighteen months working in a closely mentored paired teaching role within the Academy. We are also grateful to the Deans of the Tata Institute of Social Science (TISS) Mumbai and Hyderabad campuses, Hyderabad Central University (HCU), Azim Premji University (APU), English and Foreign Languages University (ELFU), The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London and Veeranari Chakali Iamma Women's University for their continued support in making this programme such a great success. We wish the candidates all the best for their future endeavours.

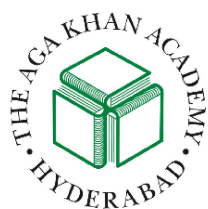
“One of the central precepts of the International Baccalaureate Programme is to honour world-class standards, while also respecting cultural diversity. In this respect, its approach

mirrors that of the Aga Khan Academies – to help students combine a cosmopolitan spirit on the one hand, with a strong sense of cultural identity on the other.”

His Late Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV
Kampala, Uganda, 22 August 2007



THE AGA KHAN ACADEMY
HYDERABAD



from the desk of the
Head of Academy

18 April 2025



Dear Parents,

Imagine if someone offered you the chance to have a one-to-one lunch meeting with anyone in the world. Who would you choose? In 2003, I had that opportunity. I sat down at a table in an exclusive London club and shook the hand of a man whose life and work I had grown to admire. His name was Sir John Templeton, the pioneering global investor, philanthropist and billionaire. He founded the Templeton Growth Fund and became a legendary figure in global finance. Warren Buffett once described him as “the greatest investor of the 20th century.”

But Sir John Templeton was equally admired for other things. His Templeton Prize honours people whose work explores the deepest questions of the universe and humankind’s place and purpose within it. It is one of the world’s largest annual individual awards, valued at over \$1.3 million. He was a billionaire who remained modest, lived simply and spoke often of the value of gratitude, humility, open-mindedness and ethical living.

Knowing how interested I was in Sir John Templeton’s lifelong pursuit of wisdom, a mutual friend set up the meeting. I imagined we might talk a little about markets and investments, but we didn’t, at least not for long. Instead, Sir John spoke about the deeper human questions of what it means to live well and to find meaning in life. In his quiet and humble way, he shared a conviction that has stayed with me: that true success is not measured by wealth or achievement, but by the depth of one’s character and the positive difference one makes in the lives of others.

As our lunch drew to a close, Sir John smiled and said, "Come to the Bahamas and visit me at home – we'll have an even more leisurely lunch and continue our conversation!" It was a generous invitation – but one I never took up, though I often wish I had. His warmth, wisdom and deep sense of purpose have stayed with me ever since.

At this time of the year, we understandably focus on exams and academic success. But let us not forget that education, in the fullest sense, is of both the mind and the heart, of the intellect and the character. This is something we take very seriously at the Academy, and it lies at the heart of His Highness the Aga Khan IV's vision for this place. We believe that academic excellence and character development are not competing goals, but complementary ones. We want our students to aim high and perform well, but equally, we want them to grow into kind and principled individuals who live with purpose and integrity.

I'm reminded of a letter written by a headmaster who had survived the Holocaust. He addressed his staff with these haunting lines:

"I am a survivor of a concentration camp. My eyes saw what no person should witness... gas chambers built by learned engineers, children poisoned by educated physicians, infants killed by trained nurses, women and babies shot by high school and college graduates. So I am suspicious of education. My request is: help your students become more human. Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths, or educated Eichmanns. Reading, writing, and arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more human."

As we accompany our children through the challenges of exams and academic milestones, let us also stay mindful of the deeper learning journey they are on – the kind of people they are becoming. That, in the end, is the true measure of the education we offer.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jonathan Long". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'J'.

Dr Jonathan Long

THIS WEEK'S NEWS



PYP EXHIBITION 2025

The PYP Exhibition is a culminating, collaborative project undertaken by students in their final year of the PYP. This year's PYP Exhibition was a grand celebration of the Grade 5's learning journey. Students inquired into a range of issues and explored opportunities aligning with their own passions and the Aga Khan Curricular Strands. Their inquiries spanned the various transdisciplinary themes and helped showcase their knowledge, skills and action to the parent and student community. We were delighted to share this learning with the students from Grades 1 to 7 as well as from four schools from the Hyderabad PYP Network – Oakridge International School Gachibowli, Sreenidhi International School, Manchester Global School and The Shri Ram Academy, on Thursday, 17 April. On Friday, the event was hosted for the parents of Grade 5 who were filled with pride to see the whole range of learning the students displayed with confidence and agency. They presented their understanding through digital presentations, physical displays and creative expressions, which enthralled the audience on both days. As the students get ready to transition to the next grade, this was a special moment to cherish!





COUNTDOWN TO GRADUATION

Last week, the Class of 2025 gathered for a celebratory dinner to launch the official countdown to Graduation. The evening was filled with laughter and a touch of nostalgia as students reflected on their years at the Academy – the challenges they’ve overcome, the friendships they’ve forged and the personal growth that has shaped who they are today. Students were formally welcomed into the Aga Khan Schools alumni community – a global network of lifelong learners committed to making a positive difference in the world. It was a reminder that, even as they prepare to leave the Academy, they are joining something even larger: a worldwide family united by shared values and a spirit of service.



CELEBRATING ART AND CREATIVITY THROUGH POETRY

We take pride in celebrating the rich linguistic and cultural heritage of our region. As a school committed to pluralism and rooted in its local context, we recognise that language is not only a means of communication but also integral to identity and artistic expression. Telugu, one of the world's oldest and most vibrant languages, holds a special place in our community – not just because of where we are located, but because of what it represents: a living tradition of poetry, storytelling and cultural continuity. Last Saturday, the Academy hosted the fourth edition of *Padya Prasthaanam – The Journey of Poems*, a vibrant celebration of Telugu poetry and cultural expression. The event was organised by Head of Telugu Language and Culture, Dr Saikrishna Ranga and a team of enthusiastic students. Chief Guests were award-winning filmmaker, Mr Nag Ashwin and also Dr Naresh Annem, noted faculty at the University of Hyderabad. The competition was run across two categories – Grades 6 and 7, and Grades 8 and 9. Participants included students from a number of schools in Hyderabad. Congratulations to all participants and we hope to host more such events to bring the community together over a shared interest and passion.



BOOKTROVERTS CLUB

The Booktroverts Club is the brainchild of Mehr (Grade 8), and Kimaya, Arunima and Aryan (Grade 7). Launched at the start of the 2024-2025 academic year, the club began almost by accident when the four students happened to meet in the Academy library. To their delight, they discovered a shared passion: a boundless love for reading. What began as a chance encounter soon blossomed into a purposeful collaboration. The four friends decided to start a club where they could come together to discuss compelling books, debate ideas and reflect on the craft of writing. And so, the Booktroverts Club was born. A club like this plays a vital role in nurturing the life of the mind. It gives students a space to slow down, engage deeply with stories and ideas, and build empathy by exploring perspectives beyond their own. In a fast-moving world, where distractions are many and attention is often fleeting, the Booktroverts Club offers a quiet and powerful reminder of the joy of reading – and the richness of conversations it can spark. The founders hope that many more students will join them in celebrating the written word and keeping the spirit of reading alive at the heart of the Academy.



COOL MINDS AT PLAY!

As summer temperatures climb, our learning spaces remain full of energy. While it may be too hot outdoors, that hasn't slowed us down – instead, activities have moved indoors, where students can enjoy the comfort of air-conditioned classrooms and shared spaces. Our Junior School teachers have thoughtfully designed a range of indoor games and activities that keep students engaged. These playful experiences nurture important skills such as collaboration, communication and self-management, all while ensuring that learning remains active and enjoyable. It's a delight to see our students so immersed and enthusiastic, embracing each activity with a sense of purpose and fun. Even in the height of summer, the spirit of learning at the Academy continues to shine brightly!



STUDENTS LEAD HEALTH AND HYGIENE PROJECT

This week, Grades 6 and Grade 8 students in the Academy's Service-Learning Club led an outreach initiative at Uppar Primary Government School in Ranganayak Colony. As part of a Health and Hygiene Awareness Project, they conducted interactive activities and educational sessions aimed at promoting essential hygiene practices among young children. By stepping outside the classroom and engaging directly with the community, they deepened their understanding of social responsibility, empathy, and the importance of active citizenship. They also began to see how their knowledge and care can make a tangible difference in the lives of others. Service learning is a cornerstone of the Aga Khan Academy's vision – a vision rooted in nurturing young leaders who combine academic excellence with a commitment to improving the quality of life in their communities. This project is one of many ways in which students are encouraged to connect their learning to real-world issues. The students are already exploring ways to sustain and expand this initiative in the months ahead, a reflection of their growing confidence as changemakers and their belief that service is not just an act, but a mindset.



WELCOMING XAVIER UNIVERSITY TO THE ACADEMY

We were delighted to host a delegation from Xavier University, Ohio, on campus this week. Xavier is a highly regarded U.S. institution known for its academic excellence and emphasis on ethics, leadership and global engagement. The visiting team included Mr. Scott Clyde (Vice President – Strategic Enrollment), Ms Tsvety Karaivanova (Director – Center for International Education) and Mr Sandeep Bhalla (Regional Manager, South Asia). Despite the examination period, our guests held meaningful conversations with a small group of students, faculty, and members of the senior leadership team. These more personal interactions allowed for thoughtful dialogue around Xavier's student experience and international opportunities. Reflecting on the visit, Ms Karaivanova shared:

"The highlight of our visit was the interaction with the students—they were articulate, confident, and had a clear sense of what they want to study and why. We were also deeply impressed by the warmth of the welcome and the alignment between the values of Xavier and the Academy."

Such visits are a vital part of our college counselling programme, giving students first-hand insights into global universities and empowering them to make informed, values-driven choices for their future.



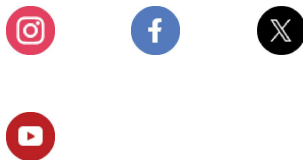
A WARM WELCOME TO THE JUNIOR SCHOOL

It was lovely to welcome Ms Archna Gera to the Junior School this week! Ms Archna, who has already been announced as our next Junior School Principal, visited the Academy to spend time with staff and students. She also had the opportunity to experience the PYP Exhibition – a unique glimpse into the learning community she will soon lead. At the end of this term, we say farewell to Ms Latha, who retires after more than a decade of outstanding service to the Junior School. A founding member of the Academy and Principal since 2014, Ms Latha has led with wisdom, vision, and compassion. Her contributions to the IB community and her unwavering commitment to student wellbeing have left a lasting legacy. She will be deeply missed. As we celebrate Ms Latha's remarkable tenure, we also look forward to this next chapter under Ms Archna's leadership.

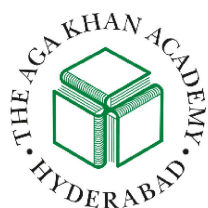
“One of the central precepts of the International Baccalaureate Programme is to honour world-class standards, while also respecting cultural diversity. In this respect, its approach mirrors that of the Aga Khan Academies – to help students

combine a cosmopolitan spirit on the one hand, with a strong sense of cultural identity on the other.”

His Late Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV
Kampala, Uganda, 22 August 2007



THE AGA KHAN ACADEMY
HYDERABAD



from the desk of the
Head of Academy

25 April 2025



Dear Parents,

There's a word I've grown fond of over the years - one that doesn't exist in English but deserves a place in every parent's vocabulary: *jugaad*. In Hindi it means a clever fix or an ingenious way of solving a problem using limited resources and maximum creativity. It's about solutions that may not be elegant, but that somehow work.

If you ever need proof that *jugaad* can be brilliant, just look to the streets of India. There's the famous story of a man who built a fully functioning washing machine out of a scooter engine, a bucket and some rubber belts - hardly pretty, but it got the job done. Or the farmers who made a mobile sprinkler system using a discarded refrigerator compressor, a cart and a long hose, all powered by a second-hand car battery. These aren't solutions you'll find in instruction manuals. They are *jugaad* in its purest form: resourceful, effective and entirely original.

And I think it's also a pretty accurate description of how most of us raise our children.

Despite the thousands of parenting books, expert podcasts and the never-ending advice on social media, nothing can really prepare us for parenting in the 21st century. Think of those moments when you're torn between being firm and being gentle. Or when you're unsure whether

to use trust or caution. Then there are the bigger moments - like the time our eldest daughter told us she was planning to hike the Pacific Crest Trail, solo, from Mexico to Canada: 4,500 kilometres over five months. What do you say to that? These aren't decisions we can Google our way through!

In those moments, parenting becomes a masterclass in *jugaad*. We improvise. We adapt. We try, fail, adjust, and try again. We try to distract our children, negotiate, bribe (let's be honest!) and sometimes we simply breathe and ride it out. Because the perfect parenting strategy - like the perfect bedtime routine - doesn't always show up when we need it most.

When my daughters were young, I noticed something that still makes me smile. Their most joyful play often had nothing to do with the expensive toys my wife and I had thoughtfully selected. Instead, they built castles out of cardboard boxes and sofa cushions, or created imaginative role plays with old clothes and blankets. The more improvised the setup, the more magical the play. It was as though the absence of structure gave their imaginations room to soar.

And yet, as parents, we often feel the pressure to do the opposite: to plan every step of our children's development with meticulous care. It's as if the right sequence of curated experiences will carve a smooth path to success and happiness. But life doesn't follow that script. It throws us curveballs. Children fall out with friends, feelings get hurt, plans go wrong and setbacks arrive uninvited. Growth doesn't happen in straight lines. It unfolds in the messy, unpredictable spaces of everyday life. And that's where the spirit of *jugaad* can help us most.

Jugaad parenting doesn't mean letting go of ideals or structure. It means doing the best we can with what we've got – and that means, sometimes, we'll get it wrong. What our children need isn't our perfection – they need our presence – parents who stumble, learn, and keep showing up with what the pioneering psychologist Carl Rogers called, *unconditional positive regard* – a quiet, unwavering assurance that they are loved, just as they are, even when emotions run high, and the path ahead isn't always clear.

The Canadian poet Alden Nowlan once wrote, “*The day the child realizes that all adults are imperfect, he becomes an adolescent; the day he forgives them, he becomes an adult; the day he forgives himself, he becomes wise.*” And somewhere online this week, I came across another line that stayed with me: “*Forgive your parents. They were learning too.*”

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan Long". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, stylized 'J' and 'L'.

Dr Jonathan Long

THIS WEEK'S NEWS



A STORYBOOK SPECTACLE

World Book Day was celebrated in style in the Junior School this week, as pupils and staff stepped into the shoes - and costumes - of their favourite storybook characters. The boulevard was transformed into a vibrant parade featuring everyone from the Hungry Caterpillar and the Snow Queen to the Giving Tree, Willy Wonka, the BFG, the Smartest Giant in Town, and the witch from Room on the Broom. The variety of costumes demonstrated the power of stories to spark wonder and delight! Following the parade, classrooms came alive during “buddy reading” sessions. Older and younger students paired up, discovering that books open doors to enchanted worlds. The celebration concluded with a captivating performance by renowned

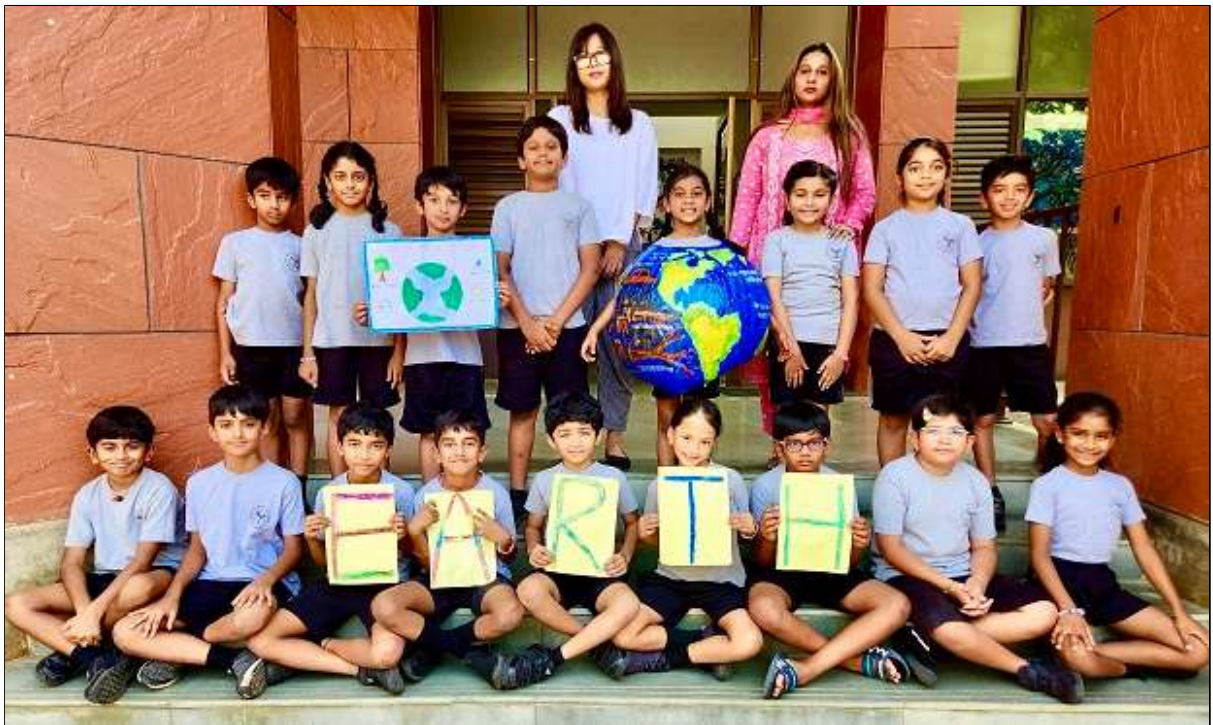
storyteller Meghana Bommatanahalli, who brought tales to life through props and interactive storytelling. Her lively session kept the children engaged and enchanted from start to finish. It was a heartwarming celebration of stories, creativity and the joy of reading — a day to remember!





COPYRIGHT AND CREATIVITY

The Senior School Library marked World Book and Copyright Day with a special exhibition titled “Copyright and Creativity – Who Owns the Idea!” Copyright protects creators' intellectual property and fosters creativity. Understanding copyright helps young writers protect their own ideas while respecting others’ – a crucial lesson for all future creators. Organised by students from Grades 6 and 7, the event transformed the library into an interactive learning hub. Students and staff participated in activities like ‘Spot the Lie’, ‘Genre Sprint’, ‘Remix It!’, ‘Creative Commons – Spin the Wheel’ and ‘Illustrators’ Copyright’. Participants explored how copyright safeguards creative work while allowing others to legally build upon ideas. They also learned that not everything found online is free to use and it is important to understand the rules around Fair Use. Most importantly, the exhibition highlighted that true creativity lies in originality. The event drew nearly attracted over 200 students, resulting in 153 new creative works and mock copyright licenses.



ADVOCATING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

On 22 April, Grade 2A hosted an Earth Day assembly, showcasing their agency and commitment to environmental conservation. The assembly featured a skit, a song, poems and a news segment highlighting the latest news around deforestation and wildlife preservation. The presentation focused on the importance of safeguarding the environment, recycling, conserving energy and protecting animals. Students reflected on the contributions of prominent environmental leaders, including Salim Ali, Dr Vandana Shiva, Sunderlal Bahuguna and Afroz Shah. Students pledged to protect the planet, promising to save water, plant trees and care for the Earth. The assembly concluded with a powerful message: 'Together, we can make a big difference'.



CONNECTING STUDENTS TO GLOBAL OPPORTUNITIES

College counselling is about exploration and finding the best fit for tertiary education for each student. The College Counselling office works to ensure a smooth school-to-university transition. In line with this objective, we organise several university interactions and events and regular careers lessons with our in-house university counsellor. This week, we hosted the Australian Universities Fair, welcoming representatives from nine Australian universities, led by the Australian Trade and Investment Commission. The event provided an excellent opportunity for students and parents of Grades 10 and 11 to explore higher education options in Australia. Throughout the fair, university representatives engaged with the audience, offering insights into their institutions, academic programmes, admission processes and scholarship opportunities. Parents and students had the chance to ask questions and gather information directly from university officials, helping them make informed decisions about their future. University fairs like this one play a crucial role in guiding students as they begin planning for higher education, allowing a clearer picture of the colleges they may wish to apply to, making the process of choosing the right university more focused and meaningful.



EXPLORING HERITAGE, NATURE AND CULTURE

Recently, our DP 1 students returned from an enriching trip to Pondicherry. Pondicherry is the capital city of the Union Territory of Puducherry in India and is known for its rich history and vibrant blend of French and Indian cultures. On their way to Pondicherry, students explored the UNESCO World Heritage temples of Mahabalipuram in Tamil Nadu, marvelling at the architectural genius of the ancient era. In Pondicherry, they immersed themselves in local culture, visiting iconic spots like Matrimandir in Auroville, strolling through White Town, and exploring the mesmerising Swarnam Musical Garden, a sensory experience field integrating sound installations and musical instruments, and Pichavaram's mangrove forests, one of the largest mangrove forests in India. The students also enjoyed water sports, finding a refreshing respite from the summer heat. The trip was a culinary delight, savouring French cuisine and local flavours.



BATTING FOR EXCELLENCE!

Grade 7 student, Tanush, recently captained the Under-14 team in the GYR Premier League, a prestigious and highly competitive youth cricket tournament that brings together talented young players from across the region. Organised under the guidance of former Indian cricketer Mr M. Sri Kanth Prasad, the tournament aims to identify and nurture emerging talent, offering a professional-level experience complete with team drafts, coaching sessions, and structured league play. Rising to the challenge, Tanush demonstrated leadership under pressure. He led from the front, scoring an impressive 65 runs off 71 balls, anchoring his team's innings and setting an example for his peers. We are proud of Tanush's continued growth, both as a player and as a leader. His passion for the sport is commendable. We look forward to cheering him on as he continues to pursue excellence on and off the cricket pitch.



GRADUATING CLASS GIFT CAMPAIGN 2025: LEADERS FOR TOMORROW

As the Class of 2025 prepares to graduate, we're excited to launch this year's Graduating Class Gift Campaign – a chance to give back and help shape a brighter future. Through the #LeadersForTomorrow initiative, the Class of 2025 is raising funds for the Student Scholarship Fund, which supports talented students from underserved communities across India. Every contribution – big or small – makes a real difference. Your support can help open doors and change lives. If you are interested in lending your support, make your donation today at: <https://payment.agakhanacademies.org/donation/in>. Alternatively, you can click "Donate" on the Aga Khan Academies homepage. All donations are tax-exempt under Section 80G. Thank you for being part of this journey.



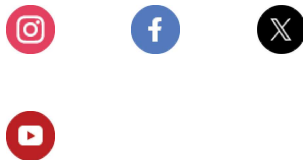
TRAIN THE TRAINERS

The Centre for Educational Research, Innovation and Training (CERT) was invited by the Telangana government to conduct sessions on 'Effective Teaching Strategies' for all subject teachers as part of an Induction and Capacity Building Programme for newly recruited teachers at Eklavya Model Residential Schools. A total of 120 teachers participated in the programme. The initiative fostered an engaging, meaningful and collaborative environment where participants exchanged ideas, shared classroom experiences and challenges that would enable them to reflect on their classroom practices. The Academy values such collaborations as they allow us to engage with the broader educational landscape in Telangana and work with teachers who are instrumental in shaping the future of their learning communities. This partnership gives us an opportunity to share best practices and work collectively towards a shared vision of quality education across the state.

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