

from the desk of the **Head of Academy**

1 August 2025



Our staff represent a vibrant tapestry of cultures and perspectives, drawn from across India, the USA, South Africa, the UK, Ecuador, Kenya, Syria, the Philippines, Germany and Zimbabwe. Together, they bring talent, experience and a shared commitment to a vision that inspires us. We are united by a belief in the power of education to transform lives, and by a deep commitment to nurturing quality relationships with young people. We strive to create a safe, supportive environment in which every student feels seen, valued and encouraged to grow academically, socially and emotionally.

Dear Parents,

Every Friday, I write a newsletter to keep you updated on the weekly highlights here at the Academy. I also have another important goal in mind – and that's to share how, as parents, we can better equip our children for the challenges of adult life.

Getting to the end of the first week of a new school year is always a relief! Our new students have been wonderful. Joining a new school takes courage and settling in takes time. And this first week has given us a great opportunity to settle into new routines, to iron out a few glitches and to get things running smoothly. It has been lovely to see happy students eager to make this special community a warm and welcoming place!



With students and staff joining us from across India and around the world, the diversity of this community is beautiful and inspiring. From the calm of our natural surroundings, young people discover who others are – others from different circumstances and different contexts. And in so doing, they discover themselves. Most importantly, they can discover their common humanity. This is one of the most precious gifts an Academy education offers young people. In our divided world, it is a quality of enormous relevance. There is a well-known Sanskrit phrase that captures this characteristic perfectly, वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम् - the whole world is one single family.



Over the coming weeks, I look forward to introducing some of our staff to you. Pictured above are the staff who oversee our IB Programmes, the work of the Junior School, the Middle School, the Senior School, and our Residential Programme. Clockwise from the top left they are: Primary Years Programme Coordinator, Ms Lavanya; Head of Middle School, Ms Afeera; Middle Years Programme Coordinator, Ms Meenakshi; Diploma Programme Coordinator, Ms Usha; Deputy Head of Academy and responsible for the Academy's Residential Programme, Mr Jeff; Junior School Principal, Ms Archana; and Senior School Principal, Mr Christian. Please feel free to reach out to any member of this team with your questions or concerns. We also warmly welcome your feedback and suggestions on how we can continue to improve the experience we offer our students and families.



For our Junior School students, this has been an exciting week of settling in, making friends and experiencing the joy of learning. Classrooms and corridors have been alive with happy voices and purposeful activity!

As students, new and old, settle into the rhythms of a new school year, here are three simple ways you can help ease the transition. While especially relevant for our residential students, these ideas apply to all young people adjusting to life at school.

Let them stand on their own feet

From time to time, your son or daughter will face challenges - anything from a disagreement with a friend to a misunderstanding with a teacher. As parents, we want to prepare our children for life, but our instincts often push us to protect them from it! Some of the most valuable lessons come when we step back just enough to let them try, stumble, and figure things out on their own.

That might mean gently saying, "You need to sort this out for yourself," even when it's hard to say. The phone can be a lifeline - but sometimes, it can also be an escape route from small frustrations that are better resolved on campus. If your child is feeling stuck, encourage them to speak with someone here—a teacher, dorm parent, adviser, or any adult they trust. That's how they'll grow.

Keep the messages clear and encouraging

This is especially for our residential students. Most students are far more capable than they realise. They're usually ready to settle in, make friends and grow in confidence. But certain messages from home - often said with love - can unintentionally hold them back. Of course, it's important that they hear your love and encouragement. A thoughtful message can do wonders. But try to avoid saying

things like, "I cry every night without you," or "You must be missing us terribly too." These kinds of messages, though heartfelt, can make it harder for them to feel okay about doing well on their own.

When they talk, just listen

Even the most independent students need a chance to check in with home. Sometimes, residential students will call home sounding upset. Sometimes day students will return home feeling unsettled. Your instinct may be to jump in and fix the problem. But often, they're not really asking for a solution - they just need a calm, loving voice who will listen and reassure them. One conversation can make all the difference. A quiet moment with Mum or Dad may be all they need to reset and re-engage. In fact, it's not unusual for a student who sounded teary on the phone to be laughing with their friends again just minutes later. Being a listener - not a fixer - is a powerful gift!

Staying in partnership

You know your child better than anyone. Your insights and perspective are invaluable and can make a real difference in how we support them. I can think of many times when a parent shared an anecdote or concern that gave us exactly the understanding we needed to offer the right support at the right time. If ever you're worried or simply have something you think we should know, please don't hesitate to reach out. We welcome your thoughts, and we value the partnership between home and school.

Parenting is the most important job we will ever have, and is the one for which we are least prepared. Despite the enormous collective experience of staff here at the Academy, we sometimes find that we don't have all the answers. However, there are some important principles which have stood the test of time. The first and foremost of these is to establish a strong "pastoral triangle" - linking parents, school and child in a relationship of common aims and approaches. This is like a three-legged stool which has the wonderful property of being stable even on very uneven ground.

One of the most powerful partnerships in a young person's life is that which can exist between school and parents. If we are on the same page and working together for the same agreed-upon goals, then remarkable things can happen!

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan Long". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr Jonathan Long

THIS WEEK'S NEWS



A MESSAGE FROM OUR SENIOR SCHOOL PRINCIPAL, MR CHRISTIAN SCHMELZ

Learning and teaching, sports and play, and all other aspects of school life are back in full swing in Grades 6 to 12. There were lots of smiles on students' and teachers' faces all week, and the general sense of happy excitement is almost tangible.

We are nicely settling into the new daily and weekly routines, such as the slightly longer lessons, the use of the Annex (the former Nursery Building) by Grades 6 and 7 students, and the Week A and B schedules, additional lesson time for Physical Education, Maths and Language Acquisition.

In the first assembly, on Tuesday, July 30, an important and provocative question was discussed:
Would you study for an eye test?

Well, presumably one could achieve a higher score or better result on an eye test if one studied in advance – yes, but the test's purpose would be defeated. Eye tests are meant to promptly provide our optometrist and ourselves with a diagnosis of what our eye care needs are: glasses, contact

lenses or perhaps a treatment? That diagnosis will only be accurate – and therefore helpful – when there has been no tampering with the test, of course. How is this relevant to learning at the Academy? Well, formative assessments are – strictly speaking – exactly like eye tests: they promptly inform students, teachers and parents about what each student's learning needs are, what interventions may be needed and what the next learning steps should be. As such, studying for a formative assessment simply defeats the purpose.

Senior School students can expect to take various eye tests – apologies – formative assessments from now on that will be designed to determine the students' learning needs, without tempering. Consequently, formative assessments do not need to be announced in advance, they do not need to appear on the assessment calendar, and they will be short and provide prompt feedback. These formative assessments will be reported on Managebac and, when sufficient evidence has been gathered in a subject, a level or grade can be awarded by teachers.

Summative assessments, on the other hand, will be designed to provide robust, comprehensive assessment opportunities that challenge students in a broader variety of ways that reflect the demands of criteria (in the MYP) or Grade Descriptors (in the DP). As before, summative assessments will be shown on the calendar well in advance. However, pertaining to summative assessments, there will be a small change, too. It has become very clear that students, when their annotated and graded work is returned by teachers, have the tendency to briefly look at the level or grade but not pay much attention to the extensive comments teachers normally provide to help students identify strengths and areas for improvement. In the future, Senior School teachers will return the annotated work to students and give them a day or two to analyse and learn from the feedback before levels (MYP) or grades (DP) are released. You will surely agree that this will help motivate students to pay much more attention to the feedback their teachers share.

Tomorrow, on 2 August, we look forward to welcoming **all parents** to the Parent-Teacher Meet-and-Greet from 11 am to 1 pm in the Commons. All teachers will briefly introduce themselves before parents and teachers can mingle, have informal conversations and get to know each other better.

In the weeks ahead, the Senior School will invite parents to grade-level meetings. These will be offered as hybrid meetings: face-to-face and online. Grade-level meetings will address points of interest such as the timing of important events, exams and curricular matters. Managebac training sessions, too, will be scheduled very soon.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR JUNIOR SCHOOL PRINCIPAL, MS ARCHNA GERA

It was wonderful to see so many new families last weekend. The friendly banter, the inspiring talks, the engaging conversations and the music. Altogether, it was a weekend that will be hard to forget for many of us. What better way to start the school year? We are grateful for your eager participation as you discovered your child's new learning environment.

I know many of you also joined our introductory sessions in the Junior School library; thank you for your insightful questions and honest reflections. It was evident that every parent shared the same aspiration: to see their child happy and successful in their own way. It was evident that you are now ready to become part of the powerful vision of the Academy, playing a pivotal role in creating a joyful and trusting community. Your influence on your children will be a subtle yet powerful contribution to our school in the years to come.

It was equally heartening to see so many new children connecting during orientation. I have rarely seen new students settle so quickly on the very first day of school, and the reason was clear: they had already begun forming friendships and felt safe in this space. The icing on the cake was seeing

parents making connections with one another, gradually shaping a strong and supportive community.

The first week of a new school year is always filled with energy, nervous excitement, warm reunions, and small yet meaningful first steps into learning. Watching our students return this week reminded me why I chose this path: to serve, to guide and to shape an environment where every child can flourish.

Intuition has always been a part of my leadership as I can often sense what people need, sometimes before they say it aloud. As a new principal at the Academy, this strength feels amplified, allowing me to truly see each child and each teacher for who they are and who they are becoming. Servant leadership is not just a philosophy to me; it is how I find meaning. Serving our students, families and staff brings a quiet fulfilment that no title could ever offer. Education, at its best, is not about control, but about nurturing independence and resilience.

This week, I saw children running freely, falling and rising again, navigating friendships, and approaching teachers with trust. These moments highlight what research in education often confirms: authentic learning is built not in perfection, but in safe spaces where children can make mistakes, manage emotions and try again.

As we continue this school year together, my promise is to lead with humility and courage, to put students and teachers at the centre of every decision, to celebrate victories quietly and to step forward only when needed. Nelson Mandela's words guide me: *"It is better to lead from behind and to put others in front... You take the front line when there is danger. Then people will appreciate your leadership."*

I look forward to seeing many of you at the **Culture Circle** tomorrow. We start at 9:30 am in the Commons. We hope to see a strong turnout, as we are eager to gather your feedback on key themes: student learning, assessment, communications and home learning. While we will share the content via email, having everyone together will make this a far richer conversation.



MEET THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL'S EXECUTIVE BOARD

Before the Academy closed for the summer break, elections were held to select the new Student Representative Council (SRC). The Student Representative Council empowers students to take ownership of their community, practise ethical leadership and shape the life of the school. It reflects our commitment to nurturing service-minded young people who can lead with integrity. Most importantly, it gives students a voice - an essential expression of the Academy's commitment to pluralism. This group plans and oversees various aspects of day-to-day student and residential life at the Academy. The Executive Board of the SRC is pictured above, along with Deputy Head of the Academy Mr Jeff Doerfler.



FIRST WEEK FUN IN THE JUNIOR SCHOOL

This week marked a joyful start to the new academic year at the Junior School. The campus came alive with smiles and laughter as students from Grades 1 to 5 reunited with old friends and warmly welcomed new ones. Engaging classroom sessions and lively outdoor activities filled the school with energy, excitement and a wonderful sense of togetherness. Joy fuels curiosity and a love for learning. When children feel happy and safe, they ask questions and connect more deeply with the world around them. Joy in school doesn't mean constant entertainment; it means creating an environment where children feel valued and excited to discover. It's in these moments of joy that the foundations for resilience and confidence are laid. This has been a wonderful beginning to what promises to be a fun-filled, creative and inspiring year ahead, brimming with learning and growth.



A RHYTHMIC START TO THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR!

Stomping is a popular form of art that creates music using waste materials. Its roots lie in African and African American traditions of body percussion. Made famous by the performance group STOMP, this art form reminds us that music lives everywhere - in our hands, our feet and the world around us - waiting to be brought to life! This week, Senior School students were in for a surprise as their teachers welcomed them back with an energetic stomping performance during the first assembly of the term. The Commons resounded with the powerful rolls of drumming and rhythmic beats, while the enthusiastic crowd cheered on, setting a vibrant and joyful tone for the year ahead.



BUILDING COMMUNITY

The energy was palpable as our Grade 8 students stepped into the new academic year. From the start, it was clear that this cohort is ready to thrive. The first day of school was not just about returning to routines; it was about setting the tone for a year of possibility and opportunity. With the support of the Grade 8 advisors, students took part in a variety of icebreaker activities designed to build community and encourage interaction. Each activity was carefully designed to balance fun with purpose, helping students ease into their new environment while strengthening peer connections. Whether it was interactive games, reflective discussions or team challenges, every moment encouraged students to step out of their comfort zones and celebrate the diverse voices within the grade. The classrooms and advisory spaces were buzzing with laughter and conversations – an encouraging sign of the engagement and readiness these students bring into Grade 8. As we embark on this journey, we are confident that this strong and spirited beginning will serve as the foundation for a meaningful year ahead. We thank our advisors for their planning and the students for their eager participation. Here's to a year of discovery and challenge!



GRADE 8 STUDENT, ARUNIMA, HONOURED FOR POETRY RECITATION

Arunima Ghosh of Grade 8A was awarded a certificate and trophy at a special event organised by *Ke Se Kavita* in collaboration with the *Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU)* in July. Arunima captivated the audience with her moving recitation of the Hindi poem *Khoon ka Rishta* (The Bond of Blood) by the renowned poet Gyanendrapati. The poem highlights the harsh realities of child labour, giving voice to the pain, silence and injustice experienced by countless children. Arunima's emotionally charged delivery, combined with her hopeful articulation of a more just future, left a lasting impression on the audience and the panel of judges. Her performance drew special praise from acclaimed Hindi poet Arun Kamal, who commended her nuanced expression and the compelling force of her presentation. The judges also appreciated her thoughtful choice of poem and the clarity with which she defended her selection during the discussion. The programme, designed to celebrate the enduring power of classical Urdu and Hindi poetry, drew a large and appreciative audience of poetry enthusiasts.



SUCCESS ON THE GREEN

Many congratulations to Grade 7 student Vivaan Pinnapureddy who did exceptionally well in two prestigious golf championships during the holidays. Vivaan was one of 13 players from across the country in the IGU Andhra Pradesh State Junior Boys Golf Championship 2025, held in Visakhapatnam. Over three days of challenging play, he scored 9 over (81) on both Day 1 and Day 2, and an impressive 6 over (78) on the final day, finishing in 2nd place at the Nationals. Adding to his success, Vivaan also achieved 2nd position in the highly regarded WAGR (World Amateur Golf Ranking) Tournament, held at Boulder Hills Golf Club in Hyderabad. Well done Vivaan on these achievements!



THE ART OF STORYTELLING

As part of a professional development initiative, Junior School Homeroom Teacher, Ms Anjum Budhwani, recently conducted a special workshop on "The Art of Storytelling" for educators. The workshop highlighted storytelling as both a creative expression and a powerful pedagogical tool to enhance engagement, retention and emotional connection in classrooms. Participants explored key storytelling elements such as character, setting, plot, conflict and resolution, and learned how voice, gesture, emotion, visual aids, props, voice modulation and digital tools can enrich narratives. Teachers actively engaged in reflective and collaborative tasks, presenting their understanding through interactive activities. Storytelling is a critical tool in education because it helps make abstract ideas concrete, connects learning to real-life experiences, and taps into students' imaginations in ways that conventional methods often cannot. It fosters empathy, deepens understanding, and builds a shared culture of learning where every voice matters. Ms Anjum's commitment to service learning and giving back to society shone through as she volunteered to facilitate this session, furthering the goal of strengthening educators' instructional practices and reaffirming storytelling as a timeless and transformative teaching strategy.



You are invited to

SPIC  MACAY

Presenting

Yakshagana

August 7, 2025

5:30 PM onwards

Commons, Aga Khan Academy Hyderabad





INVITATION FOR YAKSHAGANA PERFORMANCE AT THE ACADEMY – 7 AUGUST 2025

We are delighted to share that the Academy, in collaboration with SPIC MACAY, is hosting a unique cultural experience for our students and families. The *Society for the Promotion of Indian Classical Music and Culture Amongst Youth* (SPIC MACAY) is a voluntary, youth-led movement that was founded in 1977 by Dr Kiran Seth, a professor at IIT Delhi. Its mission is to promote awareness and appreciation of India's rich cultural heritage, especially classical music, dance, folk arts, crafts and traditional knowledge systems, among school and college students.

You are warmly invited to attend a live **Yakshagana** performance by Sri Keremane Shivananda Hegde and his acclaimed troupe of 14 artists from the *Sri Idagunji Mahaganapati Yakshagana Mandali*, Karnataka.

- **Date:** Thursday, 7 August 2025
- **Time:** 5:30 PM
- **Venue:** Commons, Aga Khan Academy Hyderabad

This programme promises to be an enriching showcase of India's traditional theatre and storytelling arts.

As we have limited seating, availability will be on a first-come, first-served basis.

Please confirm your attendance by signing up through the link below by Tuesday, 5 August, 5:00 PM: <https://forms.gle/y1Cvh8jcArvz1yPh7>

Please note: The performance will run for approximately one hour. High Tea will be served to all guests from 5:00 PM to 5:20 PM.

We look forward to seeing you for this special cultural evening.

Warm regards,
Arjun Puri
Dean of Admissions

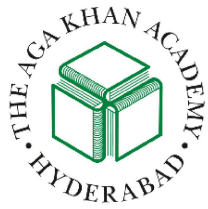
“The students at this institution will be distinguished not only for their academic capacity, but for their character and their commitment to citizenship.”

His Late Highness Aga Khan IV

Groundbreaking of the International Academic Centre of Excellence, Tanzania, 17 March 2005



THE AGA KHAN ACADEMY
HYDERABAD



from the desk of the
Head of Academy

8 August 2025



Dear Parents,

Being a grandparent carries some unexpected responsibilities. For instance, children's playgrounds are now a regular part of my life! I spent many hours of the summer break happily watching my four-year-old granddaughter immersed in a world of swings and slides. Playgrounds are magical places. They hum with energy and possibility. Among the climbing frames and roundabouts, children bring whole worlds to life with nothing more than imagination and movement. Real learning happens in these noisy and chaotic spaces. Not the kind that comes from instruction, but the kind that rises naturally from play and curiosity.

There was another unexpected discovery: when you have a grandchild, you find yourself in the company of other grandparents. I enjoyed many conversations with other grandparents on a sunlit park bench in California, swapping stories and marvelling at the lives of these little people who now occupy such an important place in our lives.

And here's what struck me most: every single grandparent I met needed no convincing that their grandchild was special. And the thing is, they're right. Because when you're a grandparent, you are offered a different lens. You have the time and the space to really "see" a child. To notice how they approach the world with pure joy and wonder.

As parents, life rushes past at a bewildering pace. It is filled with morning routines, homework, after-school activities and dinner plans. In all the stress and busyness, it's easy to lose sight of something extraordinary unfolding quietly in front of us. But as a grandparent, I've found the privilege of slowing down and paying attention. And in doing so, I've been reminded of something essential: every child is remarkable - unique, beautiful, and full of promise.

The best schools take this seriously. At their heart there is the same deep belief. Great schools create the conditions in which that promise can grow. They ensure that children are safe, seen, secure and supported. They give them the space to explore and the room to take risks. They surround children with adults who notice what makes them come alive. And they believe that education is about eliciting the greatness within each individual child. In this sense, great schools see education as an extension of parenting. They know that growth happens best in a climate of trust and care. It's not something we can force, but something we can encourage by the way we relate to children and the environments we create for them.

The famous Czech psychologist, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, who studied what it means to live a full and meaningful life, found that young people flourish when they are deeply engaged, when they have a sense of purpose and when they feel ownership of their learning. These ideas are not new. They echo ancient wisdom. As Confucius put it, *"I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand."*

This is one of the great privileges of working in a school like ours. We are not simply preparing students for exams or the next stage of life. We are helping them discover who they are and what they might become. We walk in partnership with parents during the years when a child's sense of self is forming and when their understanding of the world is still unfolding. It is a delicate and vital task. It calls for care and patience. Like a grandparent on a park bench, we must take time to see

each child clearly. To allow their light to shine. To nurture their growth. And to marvel at the vast and beautiful potential they carry within them.

Best wishes,

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

Dr Jonathan Long

THIS WEEK'S NEWS



NEWS FROM THE SENIOR SCHOOL

Seventy-six Academy students from this year's Grade 12 cohort completed Diploma exams in the May session, and on July 5, we received the IB Diploma results for the class of 2025. We are thankful and delighted that the individual and collective results of our graduates surpass our expectations, specifically that

- One student scored 44 out of 45 possible Diploma points,
- 10 students achieved 38 or more points,
- All students in the cohort were confident enough to attempt the full Diploma, out of which 73 students were awarded the Diploma.
- 24 students were awarded the bilingual Diploma,
- The Academy's 2025 average of 31.33 is, apart from the COVID-inflated results of 2022, the highest in the past ten years and well above the global average of 30.58.

Congratulations to all students of the class of 2025, as well as to their teacher and parents, and others who might have cheered them on throughout their IB Diploma journey!

One week ago, on the evening of Friday, August 1, the results of the 2025 May MYP eAssessments were published, too. With great excitement, we share that our MYP Certificate candidates achieved a remarkable

- Top result of 55 out of 56 points,
- Average of 43.0 points, which is considerably above the global average of 37.7,

Across all our candidates, an Academy all-time high of 75 top grades was achieved!

The 2025 MYP results are a reason to be proud and celebrate our students' achievements!

Sincerely,
Christian Schmelz
Senior School Principal



GRADE 1'S JOURNEY INTO SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Grade 1 began their Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) journey with daily feelings check-ins, using the inner and second circles of the "Feelings Wheel" to build foundational emotional vocabulary. This beautifully complemented their Unit of Inquiry, "Who We Are", as students explored identity and began to understand that emotions are an essential part of who they are. Through an animated read-aloud of *The Colour Monster* by Anna Llenas, students connected with different feelings and then engaged in creative station activities—designing their own feeling monsters, selecting specific emotions to focus on and reflecting on helpful strategies for navigating challenging emotions (reinforcing the idea that no feeling is ever wrong). They also discussed how they might feel in different social scenarios, listened to *The Way I Feel* by Janan Cain, and had small group conversations with teachers about moments of strong emotion and what helped them feel better. These thoughtful activities created a safe, expressive environment and laid the foundation for an emotionally aware and supportive classroom.



A JOYFUL START TO THE RESIDENTIAL YEAR!

A message from Mr Jeff Doerfler - Deputy Head of Academy

Our residential community began the 2025–26 school year with a vibrant and activity-filled weekend. Students and staff came together to reconnect, make new friends and create the warm, welcoming atmosphere that defines life on campus.

Friday Evening – A Relaxed Start

The first weekend began with movie nights tailored for different age groups. Grades 6–8 enjoyed a film with the Student Representative Council Executive Board (SRC EB), while Grades 9–12 settled in later with Mr Arjun and the SRC EB. These cozy gatherings in the student lounge offered a perfect opportunity for laughter, conversation and bonding after the busy first week of school.



Saturday – Energy and Engagement

Saturday morning was all about action, with Mountain Trail Biking led by Mr Ramesh, followed by a hearty breakfast. The mid-morning hours offered something for everyone: football, volleyball, ultimate frisbee, swimming, drawing club, walking club, and a lively music session with Mr Alberto. Students were free to explore their interests while building connections across grades. The afternoon featured “Student Choice Time,” allowing everyone to relax, play sports, or simply enjoy time with friends. Later, the Commons Lawn Area came alive with our Community Café—complete with live food stations, music, snacks, and games provided by Gameology. The day wrapped up with dinner and quiet evening activities before “Sounds Out” for each grade level.



Sunday – Adventure and Reflection

Early risers from Grades 6–8 boys went on a hiking trip to Bhongir Fort, taking in breathtaking views and enjoying the sense of accomplishment that comes with an active morning. Back on campus, all students had time for a required study hour, ensuring a balance between academics and recreation. The day continued with more student-choice sessions and self-study before concluding with a special tandoori chicken “Student Choice Dinner,” where students also voted on next week’s Sunday dinner menu. Many staff members joined the student-choice dinner as well. From adventurous hikes to creative arts, from spirited sports matches to relaxed conversations, this first weekend set the tone for an exciting year ahead. The variety of activities ensured that every student found something to enjoy, while the shared experiences strengthened the bonds between returning and new students, along with the dorm parents. In conclusion, I’d like to share a comment from a new residential parent. She told me that although initially being hesitant about putting her child in the residential programme, she would describe her child as “thriving” and “much more independent” after the first week.



CULTURE CIRCLES

Last weekend, the Junior School welcomed parents to campus for a special morning of introductions and connection at the start of the new academic year. It was a valuable opportunity for parents to meet their child's teachers and the new leadership team. Knowing who cares for your child each day helps to build a valuable sense of partnership. Throughout the morning, we shared the Academy's educational philosophy and the core values of the PYP, helping parents gain a clear understanding of the culture in which their children will grow and thrive. We value close partnerships with parents. When families and schools work together with a shared purpose, children feel supported and inspired to do their best. Thank you for the trust and support you've shown so far - we look forward to strengthening this collaboration in the months ahead!



CELEBRATING INDIA'S ART AND CULTURE

On Thursday evening, the Academy hosted a *Yakshagana* performance by the renowned artist Sri Keremane Shivananda Hegde and his troupe of fourteen artists from Sri Idagunj Mahaganapati Yakshagana Mandali, Keremane, Uttara Kannada, Karnataka. The event was organised in collaboration with SPIC MACAY (the *Society for the Promotion of Indian Classical Music and Culture Amongst Youth*). This traditional dance-drama, rooted in Karnataka's vibrant folk heritage, enthralled the audience with its powerful storytelling and expressive theatre. The elaborate costumes and striking makeup brought characters from the Ramayana to life. Performances like these help our students engage with the depth and diversity of India's artistic traditions. Such events align deeply with our mission to nurture global citizens who are also deeply rooted in their own heritage. They remind us that a good education should include awakening a sense of wonder, history and belonging.



WELCOMING NEW FACES TO THE ACADEMY COMMUNITY

We are delighted to introduce two new staff members who have joined the Academy this academic year. One of them is Ms Sarah Diaz, who is teaching English in the Senior School. Fondly known as Sarita (meaning 'little Sarah' in Spanish), she brings with her a vibrant blend of Ecuadorian and Belgian heritage. Sarita joins us from the beautiful city of Quito, the capital of Ecuador - a city of eternal spring, nestled among snow-capped volcanoes and rich in history and sunshine. Though she has travelled from the middle of the Earth, Sarita has already found a warm connection between Ecuador and India - in the smiles of students, the busy streets and the sunshine that brightens our days. She joins the Academy seeking new challenges and a deeper understanding of education through the lens of diverse cultures, languages and perspectives. As she explained, "This year, expect to learn a lot about Latin American music, dance and history, with a taste of Belgian chocolate along the way!" We are excited to have Ms Sarah as part of our community and look forward to the learning and joy she will bring to the classroom.



We are also pleased to welcome Ms Rashmi to the Academy. She joins us as an educator with a specialised focus on early intervention and remedial education in the Junior School. With an M.Phil in learning disabilities and a Master's degree in clinical psychology from the University of Mysore, Rashmi combines deep expertise and a compassionate approach to student support. Her professional journey spans NGOs, clinical settings and schools - beginning with grassroots work supporting underprivileged children and later collaborating with clinical psychologists to design individualised learning interventions. Her passion lies in building inclusive learning environments where every child is empowered to thrive. Drawn to the Academy's commitment to kindness and ethical leadership, Rashmi resonates deeply with our values and vision. Outside the classroom, she enjoys doodling and jewellery-making, pursuits that reflect her creative spirit. We are excited to have her as part of our community and look forward to the meaningful contributions she will bring to our students' growth and well-being.

THIS WEEK'S SPOTLIGHTS



DIGITS AND DEDICATION: BROTHERS MAKE HISTORY

Congratulations to Samanyu Madhavaram (Grade 9) and Shardul Madhavaram (Grade 7) on achieving official recognition from Guinness World Records for their extraordinary memory feats. During the holidays, Samanyu set a new world record by reciting 301 decimal places of Pi in one minute. Not to be outdone, his younger brother Shardul achieved a world record of his own by accurately reciting 271 digits of Euler's number (e) within the same time frame - an extraordinary accomplishment at any age. Pi (π) is a special number in mathematics that represents the ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter. Euler's number (e) plays a key role in understanding patterns of growth and change, such as compound interest and natural processes. Both are irrational numbers, meaning their decimal digits go on forever without repeating. Such achievements do not come easily. They are the result of effort and an eagerness to challenge oneself - qualities we seek to nurture in every student at the Academy. These feats also speak to the boys' intellectual curiosity and their willingness to stretch the boundaries of what's possible.



A MUSICAL OFFERING BY TWIN SISTERS

Talented twin sisters from Grade 4, Niara and Nitara, recently performed a soulful rendition of the revered Sanskrit hymn *Venkateshwara Stotram*, commonly known as *Kamalakucha*. Filmed beautifully at a temple, the video featured Niara on vocals and Nitara accompanying her on the violin. This was a moving blend of voice and melody that conveyed devotion and grace. The Stotram, a lyrical tribute to Lord Venkateshwara, is known for its poetic richness and spiritual depth, and the sisters brought it to life with remarkable sensitivity and poise. Moments like these highlight the importance of nurturing children's passions - not only as a form of personal expression, but also as a way of celebrating India's rich classical heritage. You can watch the video here:

https://youtu.be/Gxoc_z8gyDg



RACING TO SUCCESS

Congratulations to Shiv for an outstanding year in karting! He clinched the Meco Meritus Cup Championship, securing 1st place in both Round 1 and 2, and 8th place in Round 3. In the Meco National Karting Championship, Shiv continued his impressive performance with a 3rd place finish in Round 1 and a 1st place in Round 2. Adding to his achievements, Shiv has been nominated to represent India at the prestigious Asian Pacific Championship in Sri Lanka in September 2025, where he will compete with drivers from 35 countries. We wish him continued success!

“The students at this institution will be distinguished not only for their academic capacity, but for their character and their commitment to citizenship.”

His Late Highness Aga Khan IV

Groundbreaking of the International Academic Centre of Excellence, Tanzania, 17 March 2005



THE AGA KHAN ACADEMY
HYDERABAD



from the desk of the
Head of Academy

15 August 2025



The Community Café takes place on campus every Saturday afternoon as part of our Residential Programme. With a mix of activities, great music, opportunities to relax with friends, and some tasty food options on offer, it's a vibrant gathering that brings our community together in a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere.

Dear Parents,

What can flying an aeroplane teach us about raising children? More than you might think, and especially when it comes to helping our children turn fear into confidence! In fact, some of the most important moments in life begin with fear. In this week's newsletter, I recall the day I flew an aeroplane alone for the first time – an experience that taught me how fear can be a pathway to growth.

"Hotel Bravo Kilo Foxtrot Bravo, number two following the Cessna on short final, runway One Six, cleared to land," I remember hearing those words in my headset as if it were only yesterday. I was about to carry out my first-ever solo landing. I was terrified. Nothing I had ever done before that moment had tested my nerves so much!

Five minutes later, I was back on the ground and taxiing to the hangar. The feeling of triumph was overwhelming! My instructor was waiting for me with a broad smile on his face. I climbed out of the aircraft, trembling with a mix of relief and joy! To this day, learning to fly is still my favourite personal story of what it means to face and overcome a challenge; to take hold of fear and turn it into achievement; to set a goal and see it through to completion.

I also learnt a lot from that experience about what it is to be a parent and an educator. For instance, I learnt that very few things worth doing can be achieved without struggle. I learnt that nothing which is really good always makes complete sense whilst it is still in the making. I also learnt that fear is not a good enough reason alone to turn away from something.

A few years later I came across Susan Jeffers remarkable bestseller, *"Feel the Fear and do it Anyway"*. This incredible book has sold over 15 million copies in 100 countries. The basic message is that doing anything new in life is scary - and no one is immune to it. The only way to get through the fear is to do the thing you are terrified of. And to do it without delay - and then never look back!

Jeffers says that fear is not a psychological problem but an educational one. We have to teach our children to accept fear as a necessary part of our growth. I find this advice powerful and transforming, not only for myself but also for many of the young people I have worked with in schools over the years. Whether it's a fear of public speaking, or of making a decision, or of facing up to someone, the only way to get rid of the fear is to go out and do that thing.

One of the most valuable lessons we can offer our children is to help them recognise that working through fear is less frightening than living with fear. It is easy to protect our children from fear. I can remember times when I did that with my own children - by fighting every little battle for them, by

negotiating them out of experiences they didn't like or by removing them from situations which challenged them. Doing this will insulate them from fear – but it will leave them with a far heavier burden – the burden of dependence and a helplessness.

The great educator Kurt Hahn founded one of his schools with the French motto *Plus est en vous*. It means, "There is more in you than you think." One of the goals of education must be to help young people realise this truth. They also need opportunities to act upon it. Behind many of our fears lies a lack of trust in ourselves. But, as Susan Jeffers explains, gaining this self-belief will sometimes mean having to face up to and work through the things we are most afraid of.

Over the years, I've realised that the moments that shaped me most were often the ones I felt least ready for. Fear shows up every time we step into something new. The trick is not to wait for it to disappear, but to move forward anyway, trusting that we can handle whatever comes our way. In our work with children, this means encouraging them to take small steps outside their comfort zones. It also means that as parents and teachers we must model the courage to embrace life's challenges; not because we aren't afraid, but because we are.

I'll end with a lovely quote from Susan Jeffers' book - it's an encouragement to embrace the magnificence of life in all its variety, opportunity and fear. This is a philosophy worth living by; it's certainly a philosophy at the heart of a transformative approach to education, and it's a pretty good one if you ever find yourself flying solo!

"Every time you encounter something that forces you to 'handle it,' your self-esteem is raised considerably. You learn to trust that you will survive, no matter what happens. And in this way, your fears are diminished immeasurably."

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan Long". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Dr Jonathan Long

THIS WEEK'S NEWS



CELEBRATING INDIA'S 79TH INDEPENDENCE DAY!

This year's Independence Day celebrations at the Academy took on a slightly different form. With the Amphitheatre roof still under construction, the flag-raising ceremony was moved to the steps of the Academy Building. At 8:30 am, students and staff gathered to honour India's Independence Day - a day that marks the birth of the world's largest democracy and the nation's hard-won freedom after decades of struggle. Independence Day is a reminder of the values that unite India's diverse peoples. At the Academy, these values resonate deeply with our own commitment to pluralism and inclusivity. The morning began with the ceremonial flag-raising, conducted this year by our two Student Presidents, Sumedha and Farzam. The gathering stood together for the national anthem, reflecting on the sacrifices of those who secured India's freedom and the responsibility of each generation to contribute to the nation's future. Due to the risk of rain, the cultural programme, featuring student performances, took place in the Commons. The celebrations concluded with a festive breakfast, enjoyed in the company of students, staff and their families, reinforcing the spirit of community and shared pride in the nation's journey.





CREATIVITY, CURIOSITY AND CONFIDENCE

Last week marked the start of our Junior School Skills Workshops – an initiative designed to help students build practical life skills through engaging, hands-on experiences. Rooted in the Academy's belief that education extends beyond the classroom, these workshops nurture curiosity, creativity, and confidence in everyday tasks. In the *Creative Hands* workshop, students explored paper-based crafts by making colourful wind fans. Beyond the fun of crafting, they practised important skills such as listening attentively, following step-by-step instructions, and cultivating patience. In the *Needle and Thread* session, students were introduced to the short button stitch. As they observed the demonstration and tried it for themselves, they began to see how even sewing can be a valuable, everyday skill. The activity sharpened their observation and thinking abilities while encouraging fine motor coordination and perseverance. Meanwhile, in *No-Bake Yummies*, our young chefs created healthy fruit skewers, selecting, slicing, and assembling their favourite fruits into a delicious and nutritious treat. These workshops reflect the Academy's holistic approach to education, which values academic achievement alongside the development of practical skills and character. We look forward to seeing how our students continue to grow through these meaningful, hands-on experiences.



MAKING WAVES AT THE 8TH NATIONAL FIN SWIMMING COMPETITION

Five of our students participated in the 8th National Fin Swimming Competition, held at the Ujjain Swimming Pool in Madhya Pradesh on 2 and 3 August 2025, and returned with an impressive medal haul. Fin swimming is a fast-paced water sport where swimmers use fins or monofins and snorkels to achieve high speeds. It combines the skills of competitive swimming with the power and efficiency of underwater propulsion. Recognised by the International Olympic Committee, the sport is steadily building its case for future inclusion in the Olympic Games. In this national event, Shreeram (Grade 7) earned two gold and one silver medal, while Vivek Sai (Grade 7) secured two gold, two silver and one bronze. Vihaan Alluri (Grade 7) and Yashvin Sai (Grade 9) won one silver and one gold medal, respectively, and Aditya (Grade DP1) achieved two gold and four silver medals. Shreeram and Aditya have also qualified to represent India at the Junior Age Group Swimming Competition in Bangkok, Thailand, from 4 to 10 September 2025. We congratulate all our students on their remarkable achievements and wish Shreeram and Aditya the very best for the upcoming international event.



WHAT A TEAM!

When the Wednesday rains appeared and drenched the campus, they brought with them the best Junior School spirit! Umbrellas sprung open and every member of our team got involved. Teachers walked barefoot through the rivers of water trying their best to keep multiple children dry. Several children were spotted making trips to the Commons and back to help their friends get back to class sharing their umbrella. Amazingly, the smiles kept showing and the joy and friendship shone through!



RESIDENTIAL STUDENTS CONQUER BHONGIR FORT

A reflection by residential student, Nariman

Our residential programme includes opportunities for students to take part in weekend hikes, giving them a chance to explore new places, stay active and build friendships. These excursions are designed to encourage an appreciation for the natural and cultural heritage around us. On Saturday, some of our residential students hiked up to Bhongir Fort, a historic fortress near Hyderabad built during the reign of the Western Chalukya ruler Tribhuvanamalla Vikramaditya VI. The fort stands on a massive monolithic rock about 500 feet high, making the climb both physically challenging and rewarding. Reaching the top offered us incredible views of the surrounding landscape and a strong sense of achievement. Along the way, the students worked as a team, supporting each other through the more difficult sections of the climb. They also applied problem-solving skills to navigate the rocky and uneven trail safely. The hike was a way of connecting with nature while building resilience and camaraderie. The experience was a test of their patience, focus and self-awareness, as they needed to stay mindful of their pace while being attentive to their surroundings. Visiting Bhongir Fort was more than just exploring a historic site; it was a valuable learning experience that strengthened our ability to collaborate, adapt and overcome challenges together.



TASTY CHOICES!

Sunday evenings in the residences have a special flavour - literally! Each week, students get to vote on the menu for the following Sunday, making it their night to choose. The excitement builds as the winning dish is revealed! Last week's choice? Burgers and fries - a classic comfort food favourite that brought smiles all around. By the time Sunday evening arrives, there's a buzz in the air as students and staff families come together to enjoy the meal. It's more than just dinner - it's becoming a warm and lively community tradition.



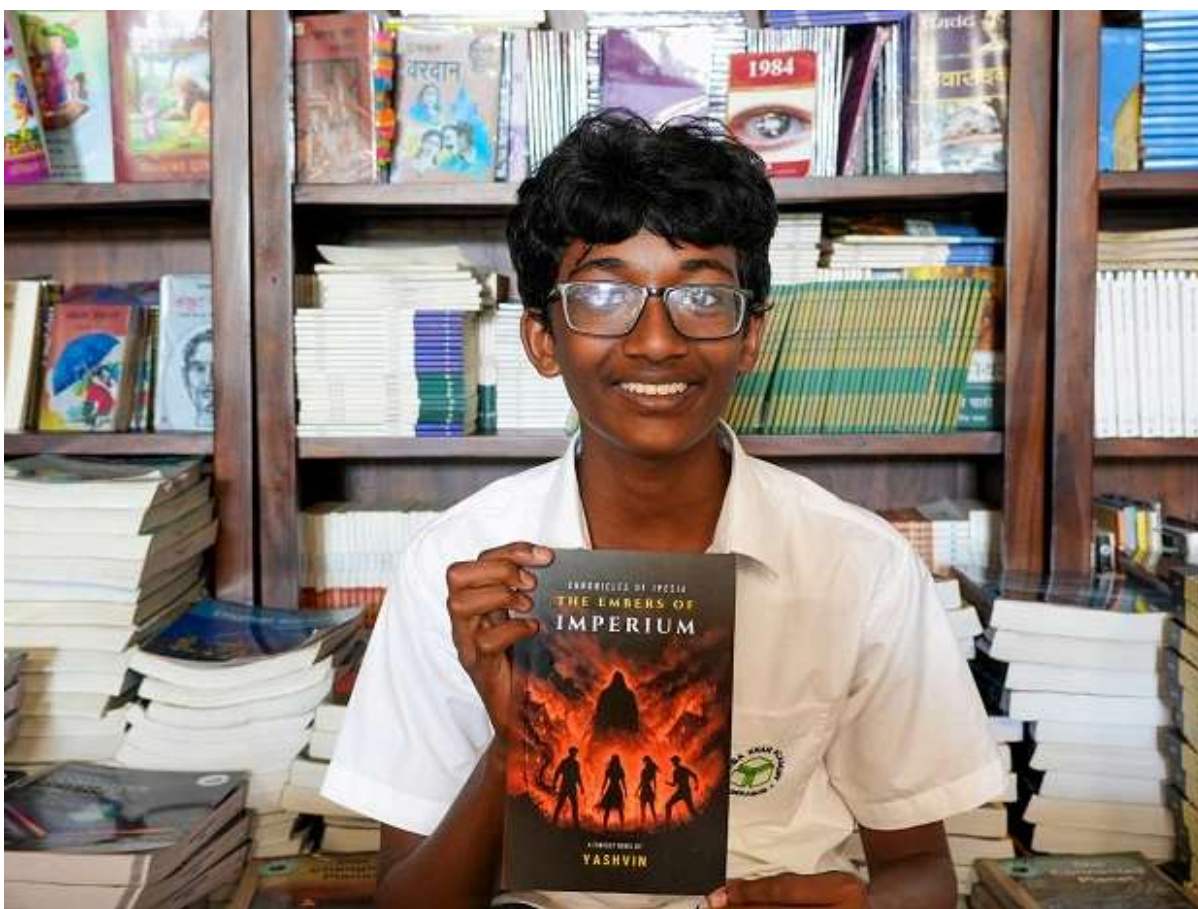
STAFF SPOTLIGHT: WELCOMING STAFF TO THE ACADEMY

In our latest staff spotlight, we introduce Mr Anilkumar, who joins the Academy with over 24 years of experience in education. Holding an M.Sc. from Karnataka University, Dharwad, and a B.Ed. from Bangalore University, he has served as Head of Department and High School Mathematics Faculty in leading international schools in Bangalore. Passionate about fostering curiosity and a love for Mathematics through innovative pedagogy, he has also taught Theory of Knowledge, coordinated Model United Nations conferences and earned a prestigious recognition at THIMUN Qatar 2025. An advocate for integrating technology into teaching, Anilkumar has led numerous national and international CAS (Creativity, Activity, Service) trips and cultural events. Now based in Hyderabad with his artist wife and daughter in MYP 4, he looks forward to contributing meaningfully to the Academy's vibrant community.



We also welcome Ms Akansha Sharma to the Senior School Humanities Department as our new Individuals and Societies Educator. Born and raised in Delhi, Akansha brings with her a wealth of academic expertise, holding master's degrees in both Political Science and Philosophy. With rich experience in the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum, she is committed to nurturing curious, reflective and socially responsible learners. She loves to connect her classes with real-world experiences. Outside the classroom, she enjoys interacting with people from all walks of life and exploring hidden historical treasures, UNESCO World Heritage sites and museums. She often draws on these explorations to bring history and culture alive for her students, creating immersive learning experiences that bridge past and present. Akansha's arrival promises not only academic excellence but also a spirit of curiosity, warmth and creativity that will enrich our school community.

THIS WEEK'S SPOTLIGHTS



AUTHOR'S INSIGHT: YASHVIN AND THE EMBERS OF IMPERIUM

Grade 9 student, Yashvin Sai Pratapaneni has recently published his third book, *The Embers of Imperium*, in *The Chronicles of Ipesia* series. *The Embers of Imperium*, picks up right where the second one left off. The Wave Walker is now hidden under a DNA masker, but the Guardians are closing in fast. Tensions are rising between friends and rivals and just when things couldn't get more dangerous, a mysterious lightning strike in a far-off village awakens a power no one saw coming. This is the most intense and unpredictable chapter of the series so far and Yashvin can't wait for readers to experience it. Yashvin has always loved creating worlds where adventure, mystery and friendship collide. Writing has been his way of exploring big ideas and bringing characters to life—characters who don't just fight battles, but face tough choices, rivalries and moments that can change everything. His first two books in *The Chronicles of Ipesia* series opened the door to a world of elemental powers, ancient prophecies and dangerous alliances.

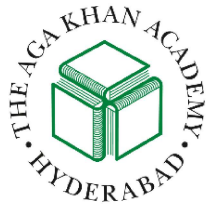
“The students at this institution will be distinguished not only for their academic capacity, but for their character and their commitment to citizenship.”

His Late Highness Aga Khan IV

Groundbreaking of the International Academic Centre of Excellence, Tanzania, 17 March 2005



THE AGA KHAN ACADEMY
HYDERABAD



from the desk of the
Head of Academy

22 August 2025



Dear Parents,

I am the world's worst dental patient! Before visits to the dentist, my stomach is full of butterflies. Over the years, my dentists have learnt to cope with this very anxious patient. Every procedure is carefully explained to ensure there are no surprises, each prod is gentle and the pain-numbing injections are generous! Knowing what to expect beforehand, being aware of what lies ahead and knowing that I am in the hands of an expert have made me much more relaxed.

After working in residential schools for almost 40 years, I've seen some common "causes of anxiety" pop up at this stage in a new school year. These typically appear 3 or 4 weeks after the term has started. These little worries can grow into distress that is more serious if they are not addressed. If you haven't heard them from your son or daughter yet, you'll almost certainly bump into them at some point. These are often concerns that arise in panic phone calls or "complaint sessions" with children. Here are a few examples of themes that can benefit from the reassuring words, "actually, that's quite normal"!

Food

Food is at the heart of school life. Napoleon once said, "An army marches on its stomach," and the same is true for children. With students coming from across India and around the world, tastes and expectations naturally vary, and large-scale cooking can never quite be the same as a home-cooked meal. At the Academy, we keep our food simple, wholesome and nutritious. Our kitchens are professionally managed and students are involved in menu planning. We offer a balanced daily menu with enough variety to keep meals enjoyable. In today's world, where young people are often faced with endless options, we believe in something different: food that is nourishing, straightforward and sustaining. There is always some degree of choice (except for Wednesday biryani!) and there's plenty of daily variety - but the food won't suit everyone every day!

Rules

Rules are never popular because they are restrictive. Rules designed for a community of 750 students leave little room for individualised treatment. Sooner or later, every child will feel frustrated by one rule or another or because of the way it was or wasn't enforced. Some of our students could manage perfectly well with very few rules – others need a clearer framework to succeed. School rules can never match the kind of flexibility which works perfectly well in the comfort of a family environment. One of the great advantages of an Academy education is the chance to thrive within the give and take of a residential community. One of the most valuable lessons they can learn in this context is how to limit their own freedoms in the interests of others.

Too little free time

Like all schools, the Academy has a certain amount of structure. During the typical weekday, very little student time is unscheduled – sometimes as little as 45 minutes a day. For a good student, fully engaged and making the most of opportunities, this is not unusual. This is a busy place and Academy students know how to work and to play hard! Many of the issues around free time come down to poor choices, bad time management or not enough sleep – all of which can be solved with a little help from parents or staff.

Not enough to do

Funnily enough, complaining about too little free time can include the classic teen-age complaint about "nothing to do." In reality, there are always things to do! Of course, some weekends are more

exciting than others, but much depends on a student's willingness to sign up for an event even if friends and social groups aren't interested themselves. For residential students, we believe in finding a sensible balance at weekends between unstructured free time and organized activity. In a world in which children quickly lose their childhood, we hold onto the value of things that are increasingly crowded out of our children's lives today. For instance, the slow walk to school up the Avenue or from dorms every morning, time to hang out with friends, the chance to take part in meaningful hobbies, sports and activities, the fresh air of this beautiful campus and freedom from the rat-race of modern urban life.

Roommates and Classmates

Despite our efforts to make the best arrangements, roommates in the dorms and classmates at school sometimes struggle to get along. In cases like this, it's worth remembering that part of the growing-up process involves making a really good effort before giving up. What's more, children occasionally fall out with each other – that's perfectly normal – and, most of the time, these "fallings out" are temporary. This is as much a part of an Academy education as anything else we do and the lessons to be learnt through it can be very transformative for young people. So, do be patient whenever issues bubble up in this area.

Theft

In every school, the problem of "borrowing" and theft is inevitable. Since many things are lost rather than stolen, it's important not to react too soon. Finding out if something is, in fact, lost or missing is a very important first step! We urge students not to bring valuables to school, to make sure treasured items are well marked and to lock things away and not leave them lying around. Loading children down with expensive gadgets, clothing and accessories makes it hard for young people to discover the value in life's simple pleasures.

Most times, when these themes come up in conversations with your son or daughter, they want to be listened to and to be calmed – to take some time-out before going back to running their own life. Usually, children can cope perfectly well as long as they know they are loved and cared for. Our children will have minor difficulties, a run-in with someone, or a little disciplinary issue. It is important that they learn to solve these sorts of problems for themselves, to discover that life doesn't always suit their preferences and that, occasionally, these small bumps and irritations are quite normal!

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jonathan Long". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr Jonathan Long

THIS WEEK'S NEWS



MESSAGE FROM JUNIOR SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Dear Parents,

I hope you have been safe and well during the untimely heavy rains in the city.

At the start of the year, my intention was to collaboratively design meaningful changes and action plans informed by feedback from teachers, parents and students, as well as my own observations. After careful reflection and discussion with Junior School teachers, we narrowed our focus to four priority areas: communication with parents, homework, assessment and curriculum design and documentation.

Thank you to the parents who shared their feedback with us on Culture Day. We analysed your input in our staff meeting and then sought feedback from students through Google Forms. After a deep dive into the thoughts shared by everyone, I would like to share with you some changes in what this year will look like for you as parents:

- **Weekly Updates:** We have made the template more concise, visual, and relevant to student learning. The new template will be implemented starting next week.
- **Phone Calls:** Please use the school landline (040-66291313) for any urgent communication. An emergency may include, for example, having to pick up your child due to a family emergency. For clarifications or concerns, please email the relevant person. Remember, your child's teacher is always your first point of contact. Parents are requested **not** to call Ms. Shabana on her mobile number.

- **Assessment:** We have replaced the snapshots with **Learning Progressions**. These tools are criterion-based and act as continuums to visually track your child's progress in skills throughout the year. Another change is that student portfolios will be replaced with **assessment folders**. As students complete formative assessments, these folders will be sent home for your review. For each assessment, you will see your child's work, the marked tool (a rubric or checklist), and the teacher's feedback.
- **Home Learning:** We have redesigned homework to make it more meaningful and aligned with its purpose: *strengthening the home-school connection, supporting individual growth, and nurturing a lifelong love of learning—without overwhelming families or children*. Homework will now include: an inquiry question for research and thinking, a set of words for practice, a choice board for reading responses, and a real-life application task in Maths. The time limit for these tasks, including daily reading, is 30 minutes for grades 1 and 2, 45 minutes for Grades 3 and 4, and 60 minutes for Grade 5. Worksheets in Maths will only be given if a teacher feels they are necessary for specific students or concepts. Home learning tasks will be included in the weekly updates next week onwards.
- **Curriculum:** Over the coming months, teachers will be compiling all curriculum outcomes into yearly overviews. This work reflects recent curriculum updates by the IB and ensures better alignment across subjects and with the MYP. We will begin sharing grade-level yearly overviews from next year onwards.
- **Parent Workshops:** We will be hosting hands-on workshops to help you better understand the nuances of our programme. The first one will focus on *Maths in the PYP* and is scheduled for right after the October break. More details will follow.
- **Pick-Up and Drop-Off:** On Culture Day, some parents requested a change in the location for own-transport students. After observing rainy days, we have moved the pick-up and drop-off point to the squash court entrance opposite the swimming pool.



A number of projects are underway to transform our classrooms and learning spaces. Some of these will also involve parents, reflecting our belief that our community grows stronger when we build together. Stay tuned for more exciting updates.

We look forward to seeing you all at our **Goal-Setting Conferences on September 13**. Teachers will share sign-up sheets in next week's updates.

Many thanks for your ongoing support,
Archana



JS CELEBRATES INDEPENDENCE DAY

The Junior School celebrated Independence Day this week during their morning assembly. Students presented information about the occasion, explaining the what, when, where, who, why and how of India's Independence Day. To get everyone involved, they held a short interactive quiz, asking thought-provoking questions related to the Indian Flag. Several students recited patriotic poems and songs in both Hindi and Telugu, delivering them with wonderful expression and emotion, creating an atmosphere of pride and respect for the nation. The assembly concluded on a patriotic note as students and teachers joined together to sing the National Anthem, echoing a strong sense of unity and joy.



ACADEMY STUDENTS EXCEL AT WEEKEND VOLLEYBALL QUALIFIERS

Our girls' and boys' volleyball teams represented the Academy at the *Weekend Volleyball Qualifying Rounds* held at the KVBR Indoor Stadium. The event was organised by Varsity Sports in collaboration with the Hyderabad Black Hawks (HBH). With participation from 40 schools, the event showcased competitive spirit and high-level talent. The Academy boys' team delivered a stellar performance, defeating Chric International School and earning their place in the main weekend league. The girls' team played a spirited match against Gaudium International School, narrowly missing the opportunity to make it through to the next stage. Congratulations to both teams for their efforts. We extend our best wishes to the boys' team as they prepare for their upcoming league matches.



NURTURING HEALTHY HABITS

Grade 3 students have been exploring how simple daily practices like yoga, exercise and mindfulness can make a big difference in our lives. Yoga, for example, not only improves flexibility and posture but also helps children develop focus and manage stress. These are skills that will serve them well beyond the classroom. Many students are taking these practices home, sharing them with their families and building habits for lifelong well-being. This work links beautifully to our Unit of Inquiry, “Who We Are”, as children learn to understand their bodies, their emotions and how to care for themselves in a thoughtful and balanced way. They are setting an example for all of us!



GRADE 8 STUDENTS EXPLORE SUSTAINABILITY ON CAMPUS

Grade 8 students recently visited the solar plant on our campus as part of their science learning. This plant is part of a 1-megawatt solar installation, a key component of our commitment to maintaining a sustainable campus. The visit gave students first-hand insight into how solar panels convert sunlight into electricity. They also explored why solar energy is considered a green alternative—reducing reliance on fossil fuels, lowering carbon emissions, and helping combat climate change. The session underscored the importance of regular maintenance, such as cleaning and efficiency checks, to ensure long-term effectiveness. This experience helped students appreciate how sustainable choices made today can lead to a healthier environment tomorrow. They returned to their classrooms inspired to contribute toward a cleaner world and greener future.



PET AND PLANT CARE WORKSHOP

One of our engaging Junior School skills workshops this week was Pet and Plant Care. This was a valuable experience for nurturing empathy and responsibility, both essential for our future and that of our planet. Students had to meet Dora, a friendly pet cat, brought in by Mr Nikhil. He shared practical tips and personal experiences on how to handle and care for a pet responsibly. The session offered students hands-on learning and the chance to interact with a genuine animal lover and his well-cared-for companion. Experiences like these help children develop compassion and an understanding of the care living beings need, reinforcing the values we aim to instill in our students.



INSPIRING RESPONSIBILITY, EMPATHY AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

This week, Mr Venkat, our CAS (Creativity, Activity, Service) Coordinator, conducted an engaging orientation session for DP 1 students. The one-hour session familiarised students with the IB CAS programme, its objectives and expectations. CAS is a core component of the IB Diploma Programme, designed to extend learning beyond the classroom and foster well-rounded, reflective individuals. It encourages students to balance academic rigour with personal development, leadership, and social responsibility. These values are central to our Academy's mission. During the session, students were introduced to the three strands of CAS: Creativity, Activity and Service, and explored how these experiences contribute to personal growth and holistic learning. The session also spotlighted ongoing sustainable projects such as Blue Cross, Rainbow Home for Girls, Unsung Heroes and Organic Farming, motivating students to participate and make a meaningful impact on the community.



THIS WEEK'S STAFF SPOTLIGHT!

We are delighted to welcome two more wonderful educators to our teaching community!

First, meet Ms Mahima, who has joined the Senior School as a Humanities teacher. Passionate about art and history, Mahima brings a unique perspective to her classroom. To help us get to know her better, she answered a few quick questions. Here's what she shared with us:

Who am I?

There is no way I can answer this question without getting a little philosophical! I'm Mahima, and I find it hard to describe myself in just a few words. Every person I meet brings out a different side of me—sometimes I'm a history buff, other times a lover of classical art, an explorer, a giver or even a learner receiving from others. Each connection adds a new layer to who I am.

What brings me to the Academy?

Both the Academy and the city drew me here. The Academy for what it stands for—kindness, empathy, pluralism and visionary leadership—qualities I discover more deeply with every passing day. And the city of Hyderabad itself felt welcoming from the start. While Delhi is fondly called "*Dilli dil walo ki*" (Delhi, the city of the big-hearted), I found the people of Hyderabad to be even more generous, open and kind-hearted. It was truly the warmth of the people that brought me here.



We also welcome Ms Vaishali Sachdeva to the Junior School as a Grade 3 teacher. As an advocate of holistic learning for children, Ms Vaishali describes what inspired her to join the Academy.

Who am I?

I was born and raised in Punjab and hold an MBA with several years of corporate experience. Thirteen years ago, I followed my passion for education and began teaching—first as a lecturer for undergraduates and later in primary schools across India, Dubai and the United Kingdom. These experiences have shaped my understanding of global education and the diverse learning needs of children. I believe education goes beyond academics—it is about nurturing kindness, empathy and responsibility in every child.

What brings me to the Academy?

My love for working with young learners and my commitment to holistic education have brought me to the Aga Khan Academy. I am eager to partner with the Junior School community to support children on their learning journeys. Outside the classroom, I find balance through creative pursuits like Mandala art, staying active, and preparing healthy meals—habits that inspire mindfulness and self-care, values I hope to share with my students. I look forward to a meaningful and fulfilling year ahead.

THIS WEEK'S SPOTLIGHTS



TANUSH SHINES IN U-14 CRICKET MATCH

Tanush, a Grade 8 student, recently represented the Academy in an under-14 cricket match against Hindi Mahavidyalaya and delivered an exceptional all-round performance. He scored an impressive 78 runs off 121 balls and took a crucial wicket, demonstrating his talent as both a batsman and a bowler. For his outstanding performance, Tanush was honoured with the Man of the Match and Player of the Match titles. Congratulations to Tanush on this commendable achievement, which reflects his dedication and sporting excellence.

OOPS! WE MADE A SMALL MISTAKE IN LAST WEEK'S NEWSLETTER!

In the story titled "Making Waves at the 8th National Fin Swimming Competition", there was an error in mentioning that Shreeram and Aditya have also qualified to represent India at the Junior Age Group Swimming Competition in Bangkok, Thailand, from 4 to 10 September 2025. The **correct information is that Shreeram and Aditya have chosen to represent India at the open-to-all Junior Age Group Swimming Competition in Bangkok, Thailand, from 4 to 10 September 2025.** We regret the oversight and thank you for your understanding.

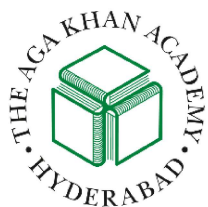
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Groundbreaking of the International Academic Centre of Excellence, Tanzania, 17 March 2005



THE AGA KHAN ACADEMY
HYDERABAD



from the desk of the
Head of Academy

29 August 2025



Dear Parents,

What would it take for you to climb into a wheelbarrow balanced on a rope 160 feet above Niagara Falls? Charles Blondin (1824–1897) was a French acrobat and showman who gained worldwide fame for his tightrope walking. On June 30, 1859, he became the first person to cross the Niagara Falls on a tightrope. The tightrope was over 1,100 ft long and suspended 160 ft above the water. Over the following months, he repeated the feat numerous times, each with a different twist. For instance, walking backwards, riding a bicycle, walking blindfolded, or standing on a chair with only one of its legs balanced on the rope. On one occasion, he walked across with a stove to cook an omelette, which he ate halfway across. On another occasion, he somersaulted and backflipped his way across, occasionally pausing to dangle from the cable by one hand!

Once, he asked the crowd: “Do you believe I can carry a person across in this wheelbarrow?” The crowd enthusiastically shouted, “Yes! You are the greatest tightrope walker in the world. We believe you can!”

“Okay,” said Blondin, “Who wants to get into the wheelbarrow?” Of course, no one volunteered!

Believing something is not the same as acting on it. Our children face this every day. It is one thing to say, “I believe in kindness” or “I value honesty”, but it is another thing to act on those beliefs when a friend is being left out or when telling the truth is uncomfortable.

Children learn to do this best when they trust that the adults in their lives are holding the rope steady. At school, this means having consistent expectations, ensuring that children feel safe and supported and having teachers who respond with patience even when mistakes are made. At home, it means routines that offer security, encouragement that is not tied only to success and an assurance that love is unconditional. These are the steady ropes that give a child the courage to act on what they believe.

But a steady and reliable environment is not enough. Children need encouragement to live by the values they are taught. We can help them do this by noticing the small steps they take: the quiet acts of kindness, the times when they readily admit the truth or the efforts they make to include someone who is feeling left out. Recognising and celebrating these day-by-day choices shows them that stepping into the wheelbarrow is possible and worthwhile.

The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle said that character is formed by the habits we practice every day. It’s not enough to learn about values or to discuss them; values only take root when they are lived out, choice by choice, moment by moment. Each time a child dares to act kindly when it is inconvenient, or honestly when it is costly, they are stepping into their own wheelbarrow and, in doing so, shaping the kind of person they will become. Belief lived out, supported by trust, steadiness and encouragement, is what builds character. And character, more than anything else, is what will carry our children safely across life’s tightropes.

Best wishes,

Jonathan Long

Dr Jonathan Long

THIS WEEK'S NEWS



MESSAGE FROM THE JUNIOR SCHOOL PRINCIPAL, MS ARCHNA GERA

Dear Parents,

Last week, I shared some of the changes in the Junior School this year, which broadly fall under the categories of parent communication, home learning, written curriculum and assessment.

This week, we are implementing two of these changes: a new weekly update template, modified

largely based on your feedback and a new format for home learning, developed by connecting with the collectively established purpose of homework, along with reflections from teachers and students and feedback from parents. You will receive the updated versions of both today. If you have any feedback, please feel free to email your child's homeroom teacher.

I understand that the new home learning structure may feel like a shift for some of you. The most significant difference is that Maths worksheets will now be given only when a student requires additional practice at home, at the discretion of the homeroom teacher. I encourage all parents to remain open-minded and trustful as these developments are the result of thoughtful research and reflection by our teachers, with the shared aim of supporting every child's growth and love of learning.

In addition to the weekly updates being shared today, you will also receive sign-up sheets for the Goal-Setting Conferences scheduled for Saturday, September 13. The conferences will be scheduled from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm and each slot will be 15 minutes long. The purpose of these conferences is for you to discuss your child's goals for the year with their homeroom teacher.

Next week, you will notice another shift: the introduction of the first round of Learning Progressions. These are part of the IB's latest developments for elementary students and act as continuums to track student progress in key areas of skill development. The four learning progressions you will receive are: role and turn-taking, questioning, decision-making and making observations. Teachers will place your child on the continuum based on observations made during the first week of school. At the moment, these serve as prior-knowledge assessments and help guide students in setting informed goals. The first of the four learning progressions, *role and turn-taking*, is elaborated in this [chart](#).

Each level of the continuum is described as a 'phase' in the progression of the inquiry skill. A marked phase indicates that the student can demonstrate most or all the descriptors within it. We will continue using these same continuums throughout the year and will share your child's progress at multiple points. Our hope is that these progressions will give you clearer insights into your child's inquiry abilities.

You are welcome to discuss these assessment tools further with your child's teacher during the upcoming conferences or by scheduling a dedicated time. At present, the contributors to these tools are homeroom teachers, with plans to extend to single-subject teachers in the near future.

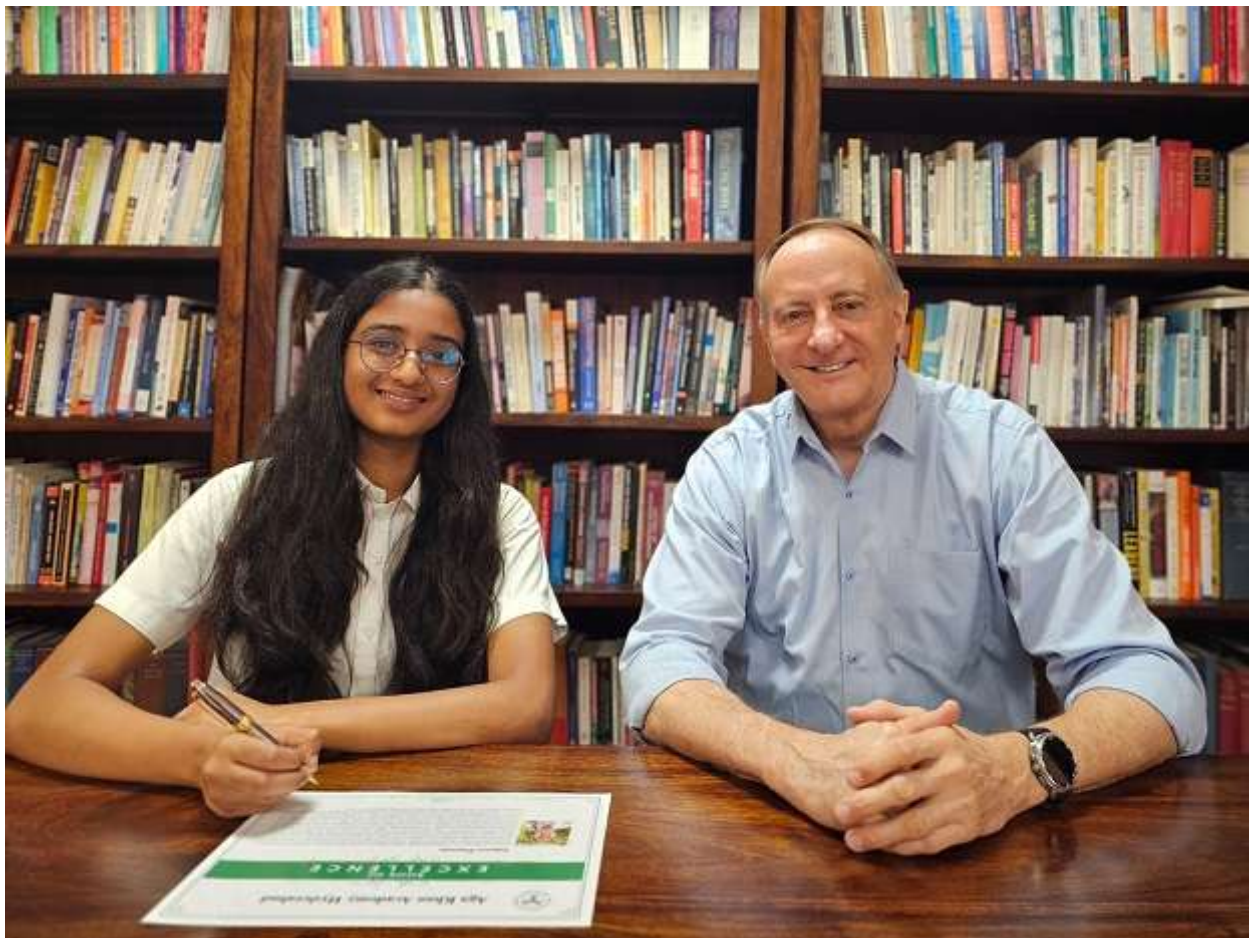
We thank all parents for their meaningful feedback, which has helped us design some of the best next steps for the Junior School. We hope these changes will enable you to understand your child's learning journey better and support them more effectively along the way.



BOOK OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS

This week, the Academy proudly recognised four recipients of the prestigious *Book of Excellence* award. The Book of Excellence is the Academy's highest honour for students. It recognises students who achieve academically, but who also show leadership, integrity and a commitment to serving others. Each recipient's name and story are inscribed in the Academy's Book of Excellence, creating a lasting record for future generations to look back on and be inspired by. This award reminds us that true excellence is not only measured by grades or accomplishments, but by the character our students show each day – their courage, their kindness and their willingness to make a difference in the lives of others.

Sahasra Punnam (DP 2)



Sahasra is recognised as an intellectually gifted and reflective student whose academic and service contributions embody the Academy's values. A peer tutor in mathematics, she has inspired confidence in her classmates and achieved outstanding results in the international CEMC contest. Her service includes working with Rainbow Homes, volunteering in educational outreach and organising health camps for marginalised communities. Her Extended Essay on economics and healthcare reflects her commitment to social equity. She co-founded the Business Club, led a financial literacy workshop for support staff and recently took on responsibilities as event coordinator and social media lead in the school's photography team. A passionate photographer and classical dancer, Sahasra combines creativity, leadership and compassion, exemplifying the Academy's vision.

Ishita Gupta (DP 2)



This award celebrates Ishita's exceptional blend of academic strength, leadership and creativity. As House Captain of Nizam, she has led with purpose and inclusivity, guiding her house to success in major school events. She co-founded *Project Pages*, providing reading resources to over 20 under-resourced schools across India. She also established the Academy's first student-led newspaper club to promote voice and dialogue. Ishita has contributed to Model United Nations, the Modern Literature in Translation Club and the Academy's Theory of Knowledge circle. A trained *Kathak* and *Kuchipudi* dancer, she combines discipline and artistry in performance, while her published writing, *Petrichor*, reflects her sensitivity to culture and identity. Humble, creative and community-minded, Ishita exemplifies thoughtful, value-driven excellence.

Ashmi Saban (DP 2)



This award recognises Ashmi for her blend of academic excellence, creativity and service. A HundrED Youth Ambassador and Waterloo Math Distinction recipient, she has contributed actively to Model United Nations, peer tutoring and Theory of Knowledge publications. Through the NGO Carewell, she has led creative therapy workshops, raised awareness for breast cancer and supported medical outreach for staff. Her initiatives also include teaching crochet in government schools and improving infrastructure at an orphanage. An accomplished dancer, singer and instrumentalist, Ashmi enriches the Academy's cultural life while exemplifying compassion, curiosity and courageous leadership.

Aarish Amin Jiwani (DP 2)



This award recognises Aarish as an outstanding student leader whose quiet determination has left a lasting impact on the Academy. As Head of the MUN Organising Committee, he led with clarity and professionalism, while as External Affairs Internship Coordinator, he built donor relations, oversaw fundraising and supported scholarship initiatives. A committed Residential Representative and Dorm Prefect, Aarish has championed student voice, planned community events and revitalised the residential magazine. His projects include co-founding the Tuck Shop, working with Rainbow Homes and promoting wellbeing through service. Whether mentoring peers, organising cultural events or serving as Master of Ceremonies, Aarish leads with empathy, integrity and maturity, inspiring trust across the Academy community.



INTRODUCING THE JUNIOR SCHOOL STUDENT COUNCIL 2025-26

We are proud to present the Junior School Student Council for this year. This is a dynamic and dedicated team committed to representing their peers and fostering a sense of community. After a rigorous selection process, Kanav, Mihira, Amany and Ishir will represent Grade 5; Niara and Nitara represent Grade 4; Kabir and Naga Ashika represent Grade 3; and Amarthya and Aadvik represent Grade 2. These students play a vital role in sharing ideas, communicating with their peers, and ensuring that everyone feels included in the Junior School. They will also represent the Academy and its values to guests, visitors and other members of the community. The team will be supported and mentored by Ms Pranti and Ms Sushmitha, guiding them as they lead with enthusiasm, creativity and a sense of duty.



SENIOR SCHOOL ASSEMBLY CELEBRATES ACHIEVEMENT AND TALENT

Wednesday's Senior School assembly began with a warm welcome from our Senior School Principal, Mr Christian, who also set the ground rules for the year ahead. This was followed by Deputy Head of Academy, Mr Jeff, who introduced the newly elected Student Representative Council. The highlight of the assembly was the announcement of the Book of Excellence Awards, recognising four exceptional students. Adding a touch of artistry, Grade 6K gave a delightful performance of "When I Grow Up" from *Matilda the Musical*, the multi-award-winning production by the Royal Shakespeare Company. Their confident singing, polished technique and expressive delivery captivated the audience. The assembly concluded with sports and extra-curricular announcements, along with recognition of our National Science Olympiad Second Level certificate holders - together setting an inspiring tone for the year ahead.



CELEBRATING TELUGU BHASHA DINOTSAVAM AT THE ACADEMY

The Junior School held an assembly this Thursday to celebrate *Telugu Bhasha Dinotsavam*. Celebrated on 29 August in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana every year, Telugu Bhasha Dinotsavam, also known as the Telugu Language Day, marks the birth anniversary of the renowned Telugu poet Gidugu Venkata Ramamurthy, who played a significant role in promoting the Telugu language. The special assembly began with a soulful rendition of *Mudakaratha Modakam*, a hymn of praise dedicated to Lord Ganesha, marking the beginning of the Hindu festival of Vinayaka Chaturthi. This was followed by sharing fascinating insights into the Telugu language, popularly called as the "Italian of the East." Students performed *Kuchipudi* and other folk dances, recited famous Telugu verses dressed as legendary poets and engaged in animated storytelling, bringing Telugu literature to life. Classrooms buzzed with traditional games and lively recreations of iconic Telugu movie dialogues. The day concluded with a traditional lunch, making the celebration a memorable mix of music, dance, food and heritage.



AN ENGAGING START TO THE DIPLOMA YEARS

Last weekend's DP 1 Academic Retreat at the Hidden Castle helped students better understand and prepare for meeting the high standards and expectations that apply to the two-year programme in grades 11 and 12. To do so, the retreat provided an immersive, off-campus experience that included an in-depth academic orientation, fundamental learning opportunities about academic studies in Grades 11 and 12, familiarisation activities and team building, and outdoor education components. The retreat was led by Mr Christian (*Senior School Principal*), Mr Sudeep (*Theory of Knowledge Coordinator*), Mr Sathish (*Extended Essay Coordinator*), Ms Usha (*Diploma Programme Coordinator*) and Mr Ramesh (*Head of Outdoor Education and DP 1 Grade Level Leader*). All DP 1 advisors joined the retreat from Friday afternoon onwards and took part in the outdoor education activities on Saturday.



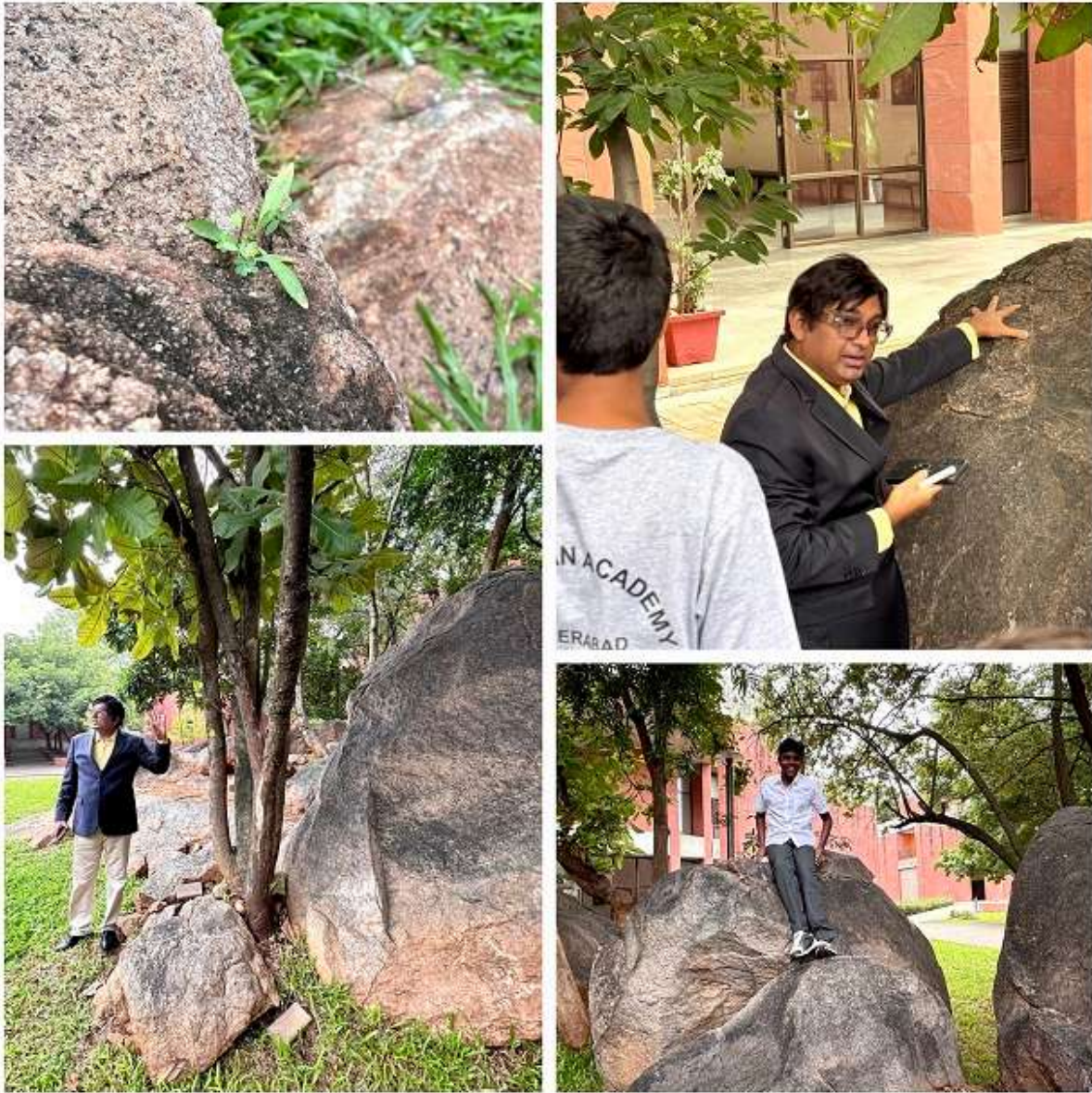
IMMERSIVE THEATRE EXPERIENCE

Our English Higher-Level students of DP 1, chaperoned by some of their English teachers, experienced "I, Josef," a 45-minute immersive theatre production based on Franz Kafka's *The Trial*. Using binaural sound and video projections, it placed each member in the audience directly within the narrative, offering a deeply sensory and immersive experience. It also explored themes of justice, power and the human condition, sparking meaningful reflections and discussions. This engaging experience aligned with our English curricula, providing a unique opportunity for students to interact with Kafka's work in a creative way.



WHAT'S COOKING!

Some Grade 3 students traded their textbooks for aprons, getting a special behind-the-scenes tour of the school's kitchen. The visit, a key part of their current unit on "Health and Well-being", gave them a firsthand look at what goes into creating the delicious and nutritious meals they enjoy every day. Guided by the school's kitchen staff, the students discovered the secrets behind a balanced diet. They learned how menu planning focuses on including all the necessary food groups to keep them energetic and healthy. A major highlight was observing the stringent cleanliness and safety protocols in the kitchen, from proper handwashing to sanitising surfaces, reinforcing the importance of hygiene in food preparation. The visit provided a perfect, real-world connection to their classroom lessons, helping students understand that good health starts with smart food choices and clean habits, both at school and at home.



FROM CLASSROOM TO LANDSCAPE: LEARNING COMES ALIVE

Reflection by Grade 8 student Insha Javid

Last weekend's hike was more than a physical challenge; it was a chance to explore the story written in rocks. As Dr Rajeev often says, "The present is the key to the past." The hike brought this idea to life. Along the trail, we observed how natural forces have been shaping the landscape over thousands of years. We saw smooth rock surfaces, polished by abrasion as wind and water gradually wore them down. In some places, the outer layers of rock were peeling off in thin sheets - a process called exfoliation, caused by temperature changes over time. One of the most fascinating sights was the reddish patches on the rocks. These were caused by oxidation, a chemical reaction where minerals in the rock reacted with air and moisture, creating rust-like stains. We also noticed cracks where water had seeped in and frozen, expanding and slowly breaking the rock apart. This is known as freeze-thaw weathering. Our hike taught us that even strong, ancient structures are not immune to change. They continue to be shaped by natural processes. It was a powerful reminder that by observing the present, we can understand the history written in the Earth itself.



GUEST SPEAKERS INSPIRE JUNIOR SCHOOL STUDENTS

This week, the Junior School welcomed several guest speakers who enriched our students' learning and linked classroom inquiry with real-world perspectives. Grade 2 students had an engaging session with STRAW India, a Delhi-based NGO dedicated to animal welfare. As part of their inquiry unit, "Sharing the Planet", students explored practical ways to protect animals, especially those living on the streets. They also learned how to stay safe around aggressive animals. The visit encouraged students to see themselves as responsible citizens, capable of caring for the most vulnerable living beings around them. Grade 4 students hosted our School Counsellor, Ms Shagun, and DP1 student Aadar Ohri, for a thoughtful conversation about emotions as part of their exploration of identity and self-awareness. Through the creative metaphor of emotions as superheroes, students discovered how feelings can guide and protect them. This playful approach helped them build skills in self-reflection, empathy, and constructive emotional management. The session connected directly to the Academy's value of pluralism, reminding students that just as we respect the perspectives of others, we must also understand and respect the diverse "voices" of our own emotions. Both experiences exemplify the Academy's mission of nurturing knowledge,

character and compassion - preparing our students to act on their values in ways that benefit both themselves and the wider world.



SERVICE CLUB LEADS THE WAY IN SUSTAINABILITY

The Service Club, founded last year by a group of Grade 8 girls, has quickly grown into a vibrant student-led initiative. This year, the club brings together over 25 enthusiastic members, all eager to lead meaningful service projects both within the Academy and in the broader community. This week, the students organised a school-wide cleanup drive. With our campus home to a rich variety of flora and fauna, their efforts served as a reminder that stewardship of our surroundings is both a responsibility and a privilege. In alignment with India's Swachh Bharat mission, the Service Club's work reflects the Academy's vision: to nurture young people who embody values of service, responsibility and leadership. By taking initiative and inspiring their peers, these students exemplified what it means to make a positive difference in the world around them.



EXPLORING GLOBAL HIGHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Every year, our Head of College Counselling, Ms Pragati, organises university fairs and college counselling sessions, giving students the chance to engage directly with university representatives, explore international study options, understand admissions processes and build skills for successful applications. This year, MYP 5, DP 1 and DP 2 students, along with their parents, were invited to attend the university fair on 26 and 27 August. Students met with representatives from several major US and Canadian universities on the 26th and with additional US universities on the 27th, gaining valuable insights into selecting courses and colleges that align with their interests. More US and international universities are scheduled to visit the Academy on 3 September. A half-day college counselling workshop is also scheduled on 4 September exclusively for DP 1 and DP 2 students. These sessions are significant for students and their parents to take more informed decisions about their future.



ENGLISH PROFICIENCY TRAINING PROGRAMME IN GUJARAT

As part of the ongoing integration and collaboration between Aga Khan Education Services, India and the Aga Khan Academies, the *Centre for Educational Research, Innovation and Training* (CERT) at the Academy recently launched Module 1 of the English Proficiency Training Programme. This initiative brought together teachers from three Aga Khan Schools in Gujarat - Mundra, Chitravad and Sidhpur - for a rich, interactive learning experience. Held between 28 July and 23 August 2025, the face-to-face sessions welcomed 73 participants who immersed themselves in a dynamic programme designed to build skill and confidence. The training focused on the four core areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, while also drawing attention to the importance of grammar and clear communication. What made the module especially impactful was its highly participatory approach. Teachers engaged in discussions, collaborative tasks, and communicative activities that encouraged them to use English in real-life contexts. Hands-on practice was paired with built-in assessments, giving participants the chance to track their progress and reflect on areas for improvement. The successful completion of Module 1 marks an important milestone in this professional development journey. It not only strengthens English proficiency but also reinforces a culture of continuous learning and collaboration across Aga Khan Schools in Gujarat, laying a strong foundation for the modules yet to come.



THIS WEEK'S STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

Ms Lini Johnson

Teaching, in Ms Lini Johnson's opinion, is more of an adventure than a career; it can be as random as Golding's island lads or as scripted as Shakespeare. Ms Lini joined the Academy to continue this journey, bringing with her 18 years of experience in different national and international curricula. She had been an Associate DP Coordinator, TOK Coordinator and is an IBEN Examiner who flourishes in environments where creativity and inquiry meet. With a master's degree in English literature, a B.Ed. and an extensive list of IB certificates, Lini loves fusing creativity and critical thinking. She has a way of bringing out the philosopher, or at least the debater, in even the most hesitant students. She has a knack for making the most reluctant student discover their inner philosopher - or at least their inner debater. Beyond academics, she has coordinated Model United Nations events, TEDx events, and student magazines, firmly believing that education combines rigor with joy. At the Academy, her mission is simple: to ignite curiosity, celebrate diverse voices and sprinkle learning with wit.

**Ms Anisha Koti**

Ms Anisha Koti, a swimming facilitator at the Academy, brings with her over 18 years of experience in teaching and coaching swimming. A national swimmer and medallist at the All India Universities Championship, she combines passion with expertise to help students develop confidence and skills in the water. Her educational qualifications include a Master of Business Administration, a Bachelor of Physical Education and specialised training in swimming coaching at the Netaji Subhas National Institute of Sports. She has worked in both IB and CBSE schools, as well as provided one-on-one and group coaching in private communities. At the Academy, swimming is viewed not just as a sport, but as a vital life skill. The ability to swim opens doors to health, fitness, and recreation, but more importantly, it can save lives. For this reason, we take swimming instruction very seriously, ensuring that students build technical proficiency but also confidence, resilience and safety awareness in the water. With her deep experience and commitment, Ms Anisha is excited to contribute to this mission - helping every student grow into a confident swimmer who is prepared for the challenges and joys of the aquatic world.

THIS WEEK'S STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



SHINING IN THE SADDLE

Our students continue to shine on the national sports stage, bringing pride to the Academy with their passion and talent. Shushruta from Grade 8 recently showcased her outstanding equestrian skills at the Karnataka State Equestrian Competition, winning 1st place in both Dressage and Show Jumping. Her performance earned her a place at the national-level competition after successfully clearing the 2nd National Qualifier Round. These achievements reflect Shushruta's hard work and discipline and also her ability to balance academic focus with her love for sport. We believe that excellence extends beyond the classroom, and Shushruta's journey is a wonderful example of how pursuing one's passions with commitment and courage can lead to extraordinary success.

“The students at this institution will be distinguished not only for their academic capacity, but for their character and their commitment to citizenship.”

His Late Highness Aga Khan IV

Groundbreaking of the International Academic Centre of Excellence, Tanzania, 17 March 2005



THE AGA KHAN ACADEMY
HYDERABAD
