

from the desk of the
Head of Academy

7 February 2025

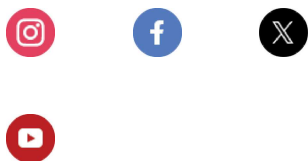
Dear Parents,

In light of the passing of His Highness the Aga Khan and as a mark of respect during this time of mourning, we will not be publishing the Friday newsletter this week.

Thank you for your understanding.

Warm regards,

Dr Jonathan Long



THE AGA KHAN ACADEMY
HYDERABAD



from the desk of the
Head of Academy

14 February 2025

Dear Parents,

In light of the passing of His Highness the Aga Khan IV and as a mark of respect during this time of mourning, we did not publish the newsletter last week. We now plan to resume the Friday newsletter next week.

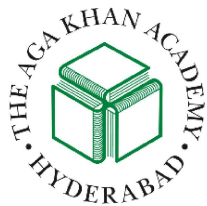
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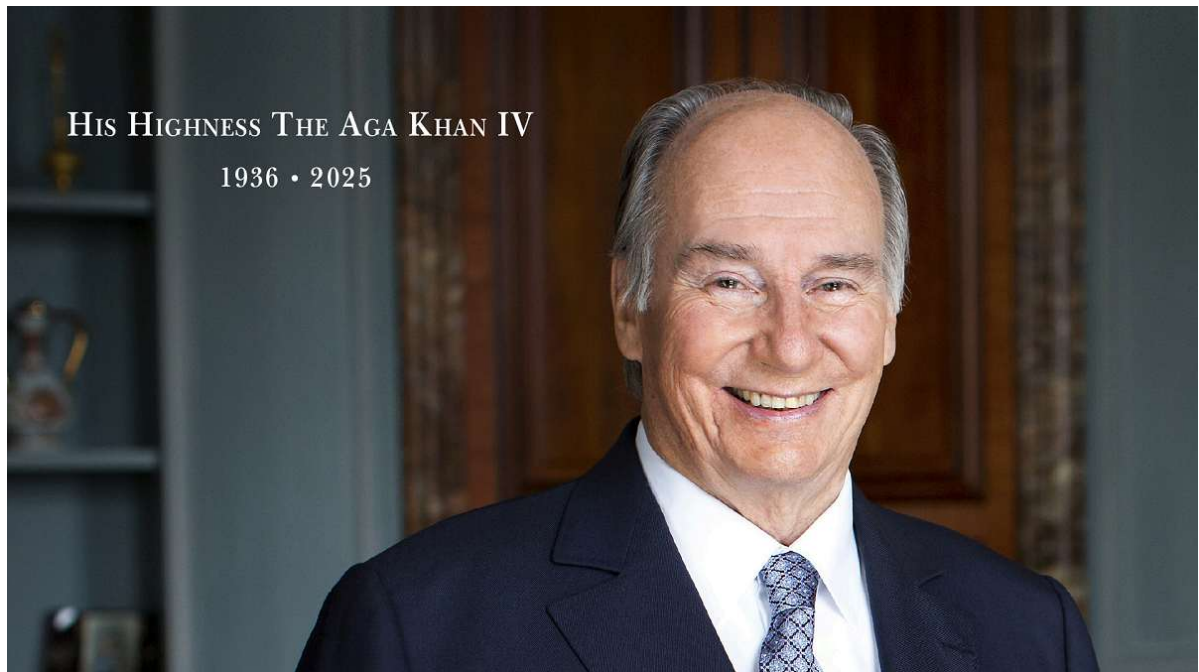


THE AGA KHAN ACADEMY
HYDERABAD



from the desk of the
Head of Academy

21 February 2025



HIS HIGHNESS THE AGA KHAN IV

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As a mark of respect and tribute to the passing of His Late Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV, we paused the Friday newsletters over the past two weeks. As we resume this week, we do so with heartfelt recognition that the Academy's achievements stand as a testament to his enduring vision and

tireless efforts. We extend our deepest gratitude to our community for their overwhelming support and kind words during this time of mourning.

Dear Parents,

One of my favourite books is *The Little Prince*. It was written by the French writer, aviator, and poet Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. First published in 1943, it has become one of the most translated and beloved books in the world. *The Little Prince* is often described as a children's book, but it is much more than that. At one level, it is a simple tale about a little prince who travels the universe gaining wisdom. But beneath its simple narrative lie profound philosophical themes about love, loss, friendship and the nature of human relationships.

There is a quotation, often attributed to Antoine de Saint-Exupéry that has shaped my understanding of how best to elicit the true potential of humanity:

"If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people together to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea."

An inspiring vision has the power to unleash the greatest energies of the human spirit. Nelson Mandela's dream of a unified South Africa ended apartheid and healed a divided nation. Mahatma Gandhi's vision of nonviolent resistance led India to independence. John F. Kennedy's bold goal of landing on the moon within a decade ignited a surge of innovation that transformed space exploration. Malala Yousafzai's unwavering belief in education for all has inspired a global movement for girls' rights. Steve Jobs' vision for beautifully designed, intuitive technology reshaped the way we live and work.

It is just such a vision that brought the Aga Khan Academies to life. The Academies were founded on the belief that education should do more than prepare young people for exams or careers. The Academies were envisioned as the incubators for a new generation of leaders, thinkers, and change-makers. His Late Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV anticipated a world where knowledge is not just a personal asset but a force for progress, where ethical and capable leaders shape societies that are more just, more inclusive, and forward-thinking. In this vision, education is not simply a pathway to personal success but a force that can lift communities, strengthen institutions and build a future rooted in meritocracy, pluralism, and hope.

This is the vision that will continue to inspire our work here. It is a vision that expects our students to aim high, achieve academic success and do as well as they possibly can. But we also work from the belief that the intangibles in life are often the things that define a child's destiny. So we also expect our students to dream and "to long for the endless immensity of the sea."

This enduring vision is at the heart of the education we offer. We honour this vision and the legacy of His Late Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV by continuing this work with conviction – building the next generation of capable, ethical leaders, strengthening communities, and shaping a world defined by integrity, pluralism and hope – a place where leaders serve with integrity, civil institutions thrive and

learning is a force for justice, peace and human dignity.

Best wishes,

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

Dr Jonathan Long

JUNIOR SCHOOL – LEGACY, TRANSITION AND OPPORTUNITY

At the end of this term, Ms Latha retires from her role as Junior School Principal. Since joining the Academy in 2011 as part of the start-up team and becoming the Principal in 2014, Ms Latha has been a guiding light in the Junior School, her leadership marked by vision, wisdom and compassion. Ms Latha's journey with the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) has spanned over 22 years. A passionate advocate for transformative education, she has been an active member of the distinguished IB Educator's Network. As a respected IB workshop leader, school visit team leader, IB Chair and consultant, she has contributed significantly to the global IB community. Under her guidance, the Junior School has flourished into a happy and dynamic learning environment. Ms Latha will be much missed and she leaves large shoes to be filled by her successor.



Following a global search, we are delighted to announce the appointment of Ms Archna Gera as the new Junior School Principal for the start of the new school year. Ms Gera has 18 years of rich experience in education, particularly with the IB Primary Years Programme. She has held several leadership roles, including Deputy Head of Primary and PYP Coordinator at Oberoi International School in Mumbai. Her career has included wide-ranging experience in renowned international schools in Germany, Singapore and India, including a previous tenure with us as both a PYP teacher and PYP Coordinator. Her global perspective is complemented by a Bachelor of Engineering degree from a prestigious Indian university and a Master of Science in Teacher Leadership from Walden University in the USA. As a certified yoga instructor, Archna regularly integrates these principles into her leadership style. She is also a passionate traveller who has explored diverse cultures across Asia, Europe and the Middle East. Known for her innovative approach and inspirational leadership, Archna has contributed to over 60 IB schools globally as a workshop leader, consultant and visiting leader. She is recognised for fostering data-informed cultures, leading professional development and promoting student well-being.

As we bid farewell to Ms Latha and express our deep gratitude for her years of dedication, we also look forward to an exciting new chapter under Ms Gera's leadership. Please join me in celebrating

Ms Latha's remarkable contributions and in extending a warm welcome to Ms Gera as she steps into this role.

THIS WEEK'S NEWS



PARENT-STUDENT-TEACHER CONFERENCE

A medley of meetings took place on Wednesday when parents and their children met with teachers face-to-face or remotely during the Parent-Student-Teacher conferences. Conversations about learning, assessments or the recent exams were particularly relevant. Parents brought their children to school for the meetings and engaged in three-way discussions about what is going well and what needs to improve in the weeks to come. From the next academic year onward, Parent-Student-Teacher conferences will be scheduled in October and February to ensure that these important meetings can

take place at times when – as needed – interventions or changes in strategies can still be implemented well before mock or final exams.



INTERNATIONAL MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY

The Academy is a diverse linguistic community and it's something we actively embrace. For students for whom English is a second language, we encourage them to keep developing their first language and to share and use the depth of knowledge they have gained from it. Every year International Mother Language Day recognises that language can advance inclusion. It is a day that promotes linguistic and cultural diversity. To celebrate this important day, the Junior School held a special assembly, bringing together children, staff, parents and grandparents to share and celebrate an array of languages including Telugu, Hindi, English, Mandarin, Bengali, Tamil, Kannada, Burmese, Bisayan, Poula, Gujarati, Malayalam and Garwali, through songs, poetry and stories. Thanks to everyone for taking part in celebrating the wonderful diversity in our Junior School.



A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME AND ART

Grade 3 students visited the Salar Jung Museum in Hyderabad to explore its collection of art and artefacts. They learned about the Salar Jung family and viewed traditional items like Kalamkari textiles, bronze sculptures and ivory carvings, which raised concerns about the use of elephant tusks. They also saw Persian carpets, Arabic manuscripts, Chinese porcelain and Japanese woodblock prints. The display of preserved birds from the past was a special highlight. The Children's Section, featuring toy soldiers and clay models, provided an interactive experience. Following the visit, students reflected on the artefacts' craftsmanship while discussing the importance of conservation and responsible appreciation of cultural heritage. The trip encouraged students to think critically about history, culture and ethical responsibility.



UNDERSTANDING CORPORATE FINANCE

DP 1 students had the opportunity to attend an insightful guest lecture by Mr Viswanathan, an expert in corporate finance. The session introduced students to key principles such as financial planning and budgeting for business sustainability, capital structure and funding through equity, debt and retained earnings, as well as risk management strategies for making strategic investment decisions. Students also gained valuable knowledge about corporate valuation and market trends, learning how these factors influence investor decisions. The interactive session featured case studies of multinational corporations, encouraging critical thinking and sparking engaging discussions. In addition to the technical aspects, Mr Viswanathan offered career guidance, sharing insights into various finance professions. His advice inspired students to consider careers in fields like investment banking and consultancy, making it a highly enriching and motivating experience for all who attended.



RUNNING FOR A CAUSE

The Academy hosted three schools from the Hyderabad PYP Network for a Charity Run on Wednesday. The event supported The Sudheer Foundation, an NGO which runs an orphanage in Hyderabad. Students from Oakridge International School, Focus High School and The Shri Ram Academy, joined Academy students from Grades 3, 4 and 5 in this cross-country event around our campus. The run was flagged off by Mr Rajesh Hatty, the founder of the NGO and Mr Abhimanyu, our PYP Coordinator who is also the Chairperson of the Hyderabad PYP Network. The event reflects on His Late Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV's enduring commitment to inclusivity and providing opportunities to all young children, irrespective of their socio-economic background. Many thanks to our PE team for organising this event for such a worthy cause.



EXPLORING POLITICAL FRAMEWORKS

MYP 2 students stepped into the world of governance, led by Mr Peter, our Head of the Humanities Department. Mr Peter introduced the concept of governance and the various ways governments function within different political frameworks. This sparked lively discussions and piqued the students' curiosity about how leadership, laws, and justice shape the societies we live in. Through a presentation filled with real-world examples, the session transformed complex topics into engaging, thought-provoking ideas. Students were encouraged to think critically about their roles in the processes of law-making, enforcement, and interpretation, and how these functions help maintain a balance of power within governments. The interactive session left students reflecting on how governance influences global politics but also impacts their daily lives. It was a reminder that understanding political systems is key to becoming informed, responsible citizens in an ever-changing world.



LEARNING THROUGH EXPLORATION

The Academy is committed to upholding His Late Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV's vision of providing students with opportunities for holistic development through real-life experiences. Recently, our Grade 1 students visited Gandipet and Manchirevula Lakes to observe how economic development affects natural resources. The hand-on visit allowed students to understand the role of public and government actions in the conservation of our natural resources. Grade 2 students had a chance to explore Hyderabad's heritage through visits to the Bansilalpet stepwells and Qutub Shahi Tombs. They saw how the stepwells, once in ruins, were restored, reinforcing the importance of preservation. At the Qutub Shahi Tombs, students learned about the dynasty's architectural and cultural legacy. These trips deepened their understanding of history, economics and environmental responsibility through direct engagement with their surroundings.



PROTECTING CROPS: AN ECO-FRIENDLY SOLUTION TO WILDLIFE CHALLENGES

Our organic farming project faced a major hurdle when porcupines and peacocks began invading the fields, causing significant damage to the crops. Our students, guided by their CAS supervisor, Mr Venkat, took on the challenge of installing fencing around the area. However, the project took an unexpected turn when the students discovered that the iron rods they sourced for the fencing were rusted, threatening the durability of the entire structure. Rising to the occasion, the team meticulously de-rusted each rod, carefully removing the corrosion to restore its strength. To prevent future rusting, they applied a protective coating, ensuring the fencing would remain sturdy and sustainable over time. This hands-on initiative fortified the farm's defences against wildlife but also aligned with the project's eco-friendly principles. By extending the life of the fencing materials, the students minimised waste and reduced the need for frequent replacements, effectively safeguarding the crops while staying true to sustainable farming practices.



21 February



Language is more than communication – it reflects our culture, identity, and history. The Aga Khan Academies recognise the importance of the mother tongue as a foundation for cognitive development, academic success, and cultural preservation. This was highlighted in the Senior School's recognition of Mother Language Day under the theme “Language Matter: Silver Jubilee Celebration of International

Mother Language Day.” Staff and students shared messages and reflections in their mother tongues, celebrating linguistic diversity and the role language plays in shaping our communities. This initiative reinforced the Academies’ commitment to multilingualism, ensuring that students not only develop proficiency in English but also maintain a strong connection to their mother tongue and cultural heritage.



TRAIN THE TRAINERS

The Centre for Educational Research and Innovation at the Academy has launched a series of pastoral care programmes designed specifically for the Dorm Parents of the Aga Khan Boys Hostel. These sessions focus on professional and personal growth, with an emphasis on responsive and thoughtful interventions. Participants were introduced to simple strategies to support thoughtful reflection. These techniques help individuals critically assess experiences, evaluate their performance, extract meaningful lessons and identify opportunities for continuous improvement. As we move forward, integrating reflective practices into our daily routines will not only deepen our understanding of the student's needs but also reinforce our commitment to creating a compassionate and empowering residential environment. By fostering these skills, we are building a community where both students and staff thrive together, guided by empathy, insight and continuous improvement.

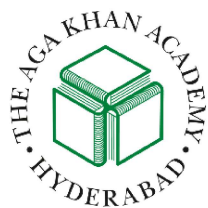
“One of the central precepts of the International Baccalaureate Programme is to honour world-class standards, while also respecting

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

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



THE AGA KHAN ACADEMY
HYDERABAD



from the desk of the
Head of Academy

28 February 2025



This was a ribbon cutting with a difference! With summer weather fast approaching, we're thrilled that the air conditioning of all classrooms in the Junior School and Senior School has been completed. This project has been on the cards for a while and has been well worth waiting for. It completes the air conditioning of the entire campus. With all classrooms, student residences, Commons, Annexe and Athletic Centre now fully air-conditioned, students and staff can keep their cool during the summer months.

Dear Parents,

I've never forgotten an article I read in the New York Times back in 2018. It was a story about George Bush Senior's last days. One section in particular caught my eye:

The former president died in his home in a gated community in Houston, surrounded by several friends, members of his family, doctors and a minister. As the end neared on Friday night, his son George W. Bush, the former president, who was at his home in Dallas, was put on the speaker phone to say goodbye. He told him that he had been a "wonderful dad" and that he loved him.

"I love you, too," Mr. Bush told his son.

Those were his last words.

The younger Bush didn't say, "You were a wonderful President." He didn't talk about the Gulf War or the invasion of Panama in 1989. He didn't mention his work with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev or the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty in 1991 which significantly reduced nuclear weapons stockpiles.

When life nears its end, people become clear about what matters.

Getting clear about what matters is hard. It's hard in the day-to-day pressures we all face. It's hard when urgent things constantly seem to take precedence over important things. Our children find it hard too. For instance, sometimes they focus on their grades instead of their learning. Sometimes they become so fixated on a single issue that they are incapable of looking at the bigger picture. This happens most often in the context of setbacks and failures. It's often disappointment that loosens our grip on what really matters.

Getting clear about what matters is all about developing a sense of perspective. Perspective is about seeing things in a bigger context – a context in which things are much more likely to make proper sense and reveal their true meaning.

One strategy that I've found helpful whenever I find myself getting unclear about what matters, is to ask myself some questions – the kind of questions that make us think and see things for what they really are.

Here are three questions I've found helpful as a parent and as a teacher to help keep things in perspective – both for myself and whenever I work with young people:

- Will this matter 10 years from now?
- If I only had 30 seconds to speak to my child (or any child!) each week, what would I say?
- If I only had a week to live, would I worry about this thing that's bothering me right now?

And sometimes, perspective can surprise us- after all, even the sinking of the Titanic was a miracle to the lobsters in the ship's kitchen!

Best wishes,



Dr Jonathan Long

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PARENT SURVEY

We are conducting a Parent Survey this year to collect your feedback on a wide range of topics. I invite you to complete the following survey which should take about 10 minutes. Your feedback is critical in helping us identify ways to make the Academy an even better place and one which is committed to continuous improvement.

[Parent Survey 2025](#)

THIS WEEK'S NEWS



BEYOND BORDERS: CONNECTING IB LEARNING TO GLOBAL DIPLOMACY

It was a pleasure to welcome Mr Paul Sierleja, Vice Consul of the US Consulate in Hyderabad, to the Academy on Wednesday. Mr Sierleja spoke on US foreign policy, global interconnectedness and security in international relations. His presentation highlighted themes including the continuity of US national interests, the vulnerability of global networks, the geopolitical

significance of maritime trade routes and the role of AI in global politics. The interactive Q&A session that followed was a wonderful opportunity for students to engage in discussion with our guest. This experience reinforced the importance of critical thinking, international cooperation and a deeper understanding of global governance. This interaction was organised by the *Beyond Borders* initiative – a student-led project that brings experts and students together to discuss pressing international issues. By facilitating direct engagement with diplomats and policymakers, *Beyond Borders* shapes globally aware, informed and future-ready leaders, preparing them for roles in international affairs.



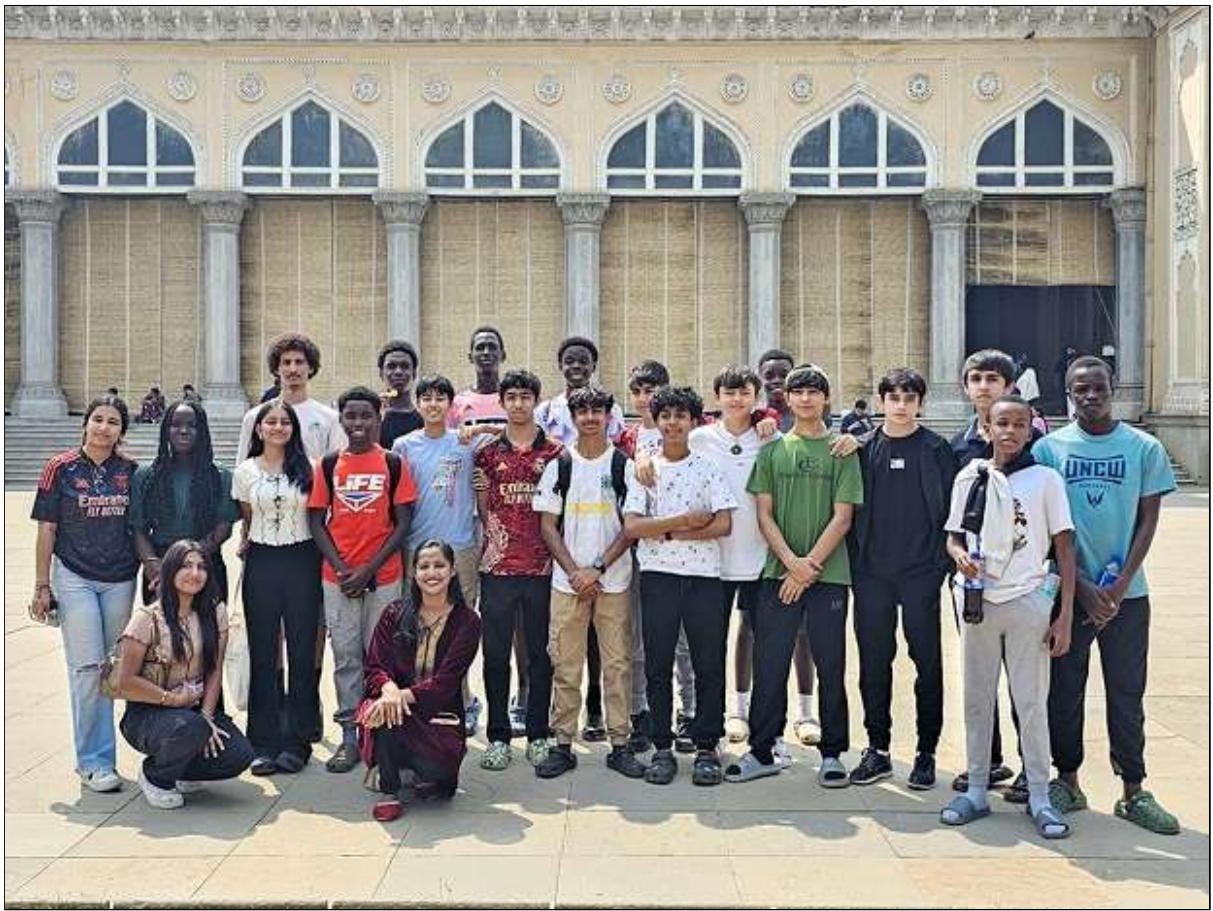
A VISIT TO THE PAST

The *Exploring Artefacts Service Project* undertook a second visit to the Telangana Archaeological Museum to uncover the stories behind artefacts. Students had the chance to explore a number of fascinating pieces held by the museum, each holding a piece of history waiting to be understood. Students individually selected two to three artefacts and conducted a detailed study about their origins, significance and historical context. The experience of carefully observing intricate sculptures, portraits and manuscripts brought history to life in a way that books often cannot. This was an engaging and insightful visit, reinforcing the project's aim to make museums more accessible and relevant.



A FUN-FILLED DAY AT THE FARM

Grade 1 students recently had an exciting day at the farm, experiencing nature up close! From the moment they arrived, the fresh air and lush greenery created the perfect setting for a day of adventure and learning. The children had a wonderful time riding a bullock cart and a tractor, exploring the petting farm and playfully interacting with friendly animals like rabbits and ducks. A visit to the organic farm gave them valuable insights into sustainable farming and the benefits of chemical-free crops. The students also enjoyed hiking on hay, adding to their day's excitement and adventure. The fun-filled trip ended with a refreshing splash in the swimming pool, leaving them with unforgettable memories of their farm visit!



EXCHANGE STUDENTS VISIT CHARMINAR

Our Exchange Programme students from Mombasa and Maputo visited one of Hyderabad's most iconic landmarks, Charminar last week. Built in 1591 by Sultan Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah, the fifth ruler of the Qutb Shahi dynasty, Charminar is a symbol of Hyderabad's rich history, vibrant trade and cultural heritage. Constructed to commemorate the end of a deadly plague, Charminar became the heart of the city's commercial and social life, surrounded by bustling markets that continue to thrive centuries later. This immersive experience deepened our exchange students' appreciation for Hyderabad's historical and cultural significance and highlighted the enduring legacy of trade, craftsmanship and architectural grandeur that continues to shape the city's identity today.



CAMPING ADVENTURE AT DECCAN TRAILS

Allowing students to step into a different environment from their daily routines provides a powerful opportunity for a unique kind of learning - one that builds resilience, teamwork, and a sense of adventure. Grade 5 students recently enjoyed a camping trip to Deccan Trails, Vikarabad, where they immersed themselves in challenges that pushed their limits and strengthened their bonds with one another. The camp was packed with activities, including zip lining, rock climbing, trekking, swimming, and even rain dancing. These experiences encouraged students to embrace challenges, step out of their comfort zones, and discover newfound confidence. A particularly meaningful part of the trip was a visit to a local school, where students engaged in community service and made thoughtful donations—an experience that deepened their sense of empathy and social responsibility. Students returned home with more than just memories; they carried with them lessons in perseverance, collaboration, and self-discovery. These moments of exploration and growth are what make such experiences truly invaluable, shaping students into more resilient, adventurous, and compassionate individuals.



MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

DP 1 students recently completed their third visit to the Rainbow Home as part of their CAS Service Project, mentoring orphaned children in English communication, mathematics, and art. By engaging in meaningful interactions, students gain a broader perspective on social responsibility while fostering inclusivity and cross-cultural exchange. The bonds formed go beyond the lessons, creating a sense of friendship, connection and shared purpose. This project strongly aligns with the Academy's vision of developing ethical and globally minded leaders who are committed to making a meaningful difference in the world. By applying their learning in real-world contexts, students embody the Academy's mission of service and leadership, demonstrating that education is most impactful when used to uplift others.



PRESERVING ECOLOGY

Students from Charminar dorm recently took action to protect the Academy's Organic Farm by installing a sturdy fence. This practical step helps safeguard young trees and crops from wild animals, ensuring the farm continues to thrive. The Organic Farm is an important part of the Academy's sustainability efforts, teaching students about conservation and responsible farming. By building this fence, the students are playing a direct role in protecting natural resources and supporting eco-friendly practices. Their efforts show the power of teamwork and taking responsibility for the environment. A big thank you to the Charminar dorm students for their dedication to keeping the farm safe and sustainable!x



RESIDENTIAL CULTURAL FEST

Last weekend, the residential community at the Academy held a cultural evening to recognise global diversity. Each performance showcased the rich heritage of different regions across India and the world, offering a glimpse into the traditions, music and stories that shape various cultures. With students and staff representing 21 countries, the event was a reflection of the Academy's commitment to diversity, pluralism, and global mindedness. It highlighted the importance of understanding and appreciating different perspectives, reinforcing our belief that cultural exchange strengthens our collective identity and deepens mutual respect. The evening was a reminder of the inclusive spirit that defines our community. It underscored the Academy's mission to foster an environment where diversity is acknowledged and cherished. Events like these inspire a sense of belonging and remind us that the world is best understood through shared experiences and open hearts.



INVITATIONAL MTB COMPETITION 2025

The Academy was proud to host an Invitational MTB Competition on 22 February, bringing together talented cyclists from across the region. The event saw enthusiastic participation from the Hyderabad District Cycling Association, with riders showcasing their skill and sportsmanship. The MTB course at the Academy offered an exciting mix of on-road and off-road terrain, featuring winding dirt trails, sharp turns, rolling elevations, rocky patches and forested stretches. The natural landscape created a thrilling and competitive challenge for all riders. A big thank you to all the riders, organisers and supporters who contributed to making this event a great success. We look forward to hosting more exciting MTB competitions in the future!

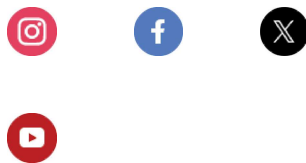


CHESS CHAMPION

Congratulations to Hemanth on his recent achievement in the Children's Champion League chess competition held last Sunday! He secured an impressive 7th position in the Under-11 category, a testament to his dedication and hard work. This accomplishment reflects his commitment to the game and we are incredibly proud of his efforts. Such achievements deserve recognition and it is wonderful to see his passion for chess translating into success. May he continue to excel and reach even greater heights!

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