

from the desk of the
Head of Academy

6 February 2026



Dear Parents,

“Dad! I’m going to study Astronomy!” I remember the day my eldest daughter, then aged 15, came home from school with this unexpected announcement! Once I’d recovered from the shock of this very “unscientific” child expressing a sudden interest in Science, I said, “What on earth made you decide that?” Her answer illustrated one of the most fundamental truths in education. “Well, actually, I’m not so interested in Astronomy but I really think the teacher is amazing!”

Some years ago, a young journalist by the name of Sandy Starr carried out interviews with key thinkers in science from around the world, ranging in age from 19 to 93 and including young whiz kids and Nobel Prize winners. Each was asked the same simple question: “What inspired you to take up science?”

The most common response to the question surprised a lot of people. It was this: *they were inspired by a teacher or someone who took an interest in them*. The scientists spoke about teachers whose enthusiasm was “relentless and infectious” or teachers who encouraged them through difficult concepts and challenging assignments. Time and again, they pointed to a relationship of trust and inspiration between teacher and student.

Therein lies a most fundamental truth about education: Quality relationships lie at the heart of effective teaching and learning. At first, my daughter had little interest in Astronomy for its own sake. The spark of curiosity was ignited by a person and not a subject. The secret of this “learning relationship” doesn’t have a lot to do with professional qualifications or techniques alone – important though they are in education. The heart of this relationship is found in the compelling power of openness, integrity, honesty and the transformation that comes from respecting young people as individuals. As the great novelist and philosopher Johann Goethe put it, “we only truly learn from those we love.”

It doesn’t much matter what we want to teach – whether it’s Science or English, Math or Art. It is a teacher’s ability to inspire that makes the most significant difference. Technology, resources, fine classrooms and a great curriculum are all secondary to this overriding truth. That’s why we must always place an emphasis on the quality of relationships in working with young people.

Kurt Hahn, the founder of the Outward Bound movement and the United World Colleges, once told the story of how he heard a teacher say, “I have no faith in this boy.” Kurt Hahn replied, “Then you have no right to educate him....”

Postscript: My daughter’s Astronomy teacher was Mr Chris Starr (Yes – an Astronomy teacher called Mr “Star”!). It was his son, Sandy Starr, who carried out these remarkable interviews with scientists!

Best wishes,

Jonathan Long

Dr Jonathan Long

THIS WEEK'S NEWS



AN EVENING OF CLASSICAL MUSIC: FRIDAY 13 FEBRUARY

We are delighted to invite parents to a special evening of music on Thursday, 13 February, featuring internationally acclaimed sitarist Asad Khan ji, accompanied by Altamash Ansari on piano and Kalpa Jyoti ji on tabla. A Grammy-recognised artist trained in the Mewati Gharana tradition, Asad Khan is among the most respected Indian classical musicians performing today. His work spans concert halls and global stages, including performances with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and a historic appearance at the Nobel Peace Prize Concert in Oslo, where he became the first Indian musician to play the sitar. His collaborations with A. R. Rahman and contributions to internationally celebrated film scores have helped introduce the sitar to new audiences worldwide. The concert will run from 5:00 to 6:15 pm, preceded by high tea from 4:30 pm. Rooted in classical traditions, the programme brings sitar and piano together as equal voices, blending raga, harmony and improvisation in a thoughtful musical dialogue.



A RAINBOW IN MOTION: RUN FOR A CAUSE

On a beautiful winter's morning this week, the Junior School hosted *Run for a Cause*, turning the campus into a moving spectrum of colour and community spirit! Students, parents and staff ran, walked, and jogged in four colours, each representing a cause with global resonance. Blue marked a commitment to educating girls; yellow to breaking cycles of poverty and upholding human dignity; green to environmental stewardship; and red to the welfare and safety of stray animals. Together, the colours traced a quiet but powerful statement across the campus. The event began with a high-energy warm-up led by the Physical Education team and senior students, before participants set out on 2.5 km or 5 km routes. It was not a race, but a shared undertaking, defined less by speed than participation. *Run for a Cause* offered a simple reminder of what community can look like when values are put into motion. It reflected the Academy's belief that education extends beyond classrooms into lived experience. By bringing together service and collective action, the morning offered a small but telling expression of the values the Academy seeks to cultivate in its students and in its community.



EXCHANGE STUDENTS VISIT QUTUB SHAHI TOMBS

Our Exchange Programme students from Mombasa and Maputo visited one of the most iconic landmarks, the Qutub Shahi Tombs, in the old city of Hyderabad. It houses seven quadrangular-shaped tombs dedicated to the former kings of Golconda. Surrounded by landscape gardens called Ibrahim Bagh, these structures are donned with exquisitely carved arches, columns, domes, minarets and galleries, highlighting the architectural genius of the Qutub Shahi dynasty. Also known as the Seven Tombs, it is a symbol of Hyderabad's rich history and cultural heritage. This immersive experience deepened our exchange students' appreciation for Hyderabad's enduring legacy of historical and cultural significance. The students also appreciated the *Aga Khan Trust for Culture's* efforts to restore the tombs and uphold the beauty of this remarkable piece of history.



A DAY OF CONNECTION AND COMPASSION

Last week, a group of DP 1 students spent a day at the Vivekananda Old Age Home as part of their Creativity, Activity and Service (CAS) programme. What they had planned as a modest visit - a Telugu film screening accompanied by popcorn - evolved into something far more personal. Students and residents lingered over shared reactions to the film, traded stories and settled into an easy companionship. Trust formed quickly, and with it a sense of mutual warmth. The residents' response was unmistakable; smiles lingered long after the film ended and many asked the students to return. In reflecting on the visit, students spoke of its unexpected depth. They came away with a renewed understanding that meaningful connection does not require grand gestures—only time, attention and presence. Encouraged by the experience, they are now planning further visits with more interactive activities, hoping to build on the relationships they have begun. The visit echoed the vision of His Late Highness Aga Khan IV, who believed education should cultivate both intellect and compassion, and prepare young people to serve the dignity of others.



A CELEBRATION OF READING

The Senior School Library buzzed with excitement this week as it celebrated the successful completion of the 'A Book A Week' Reading Challenge for students from Grades 6-8. Conducted over six weeks during November-December 2025, the initiative encouraged students to explore a curated range of non-fiction texts across diverse subjects. Students showcased their learning through creative evidence submissions, with a strong focus on handwritten and student-made responses. A reading thermometer displayed in the library tracked collective progress, fostering enthusiasm, healthy competition and a vibrant reading culture. To recognise their efforts, the library hosted a pizza party for the winning sections and honoured the Top Readers. Student reflections highlighted how the challenge inspired consistent reading habits, making the initiative a joyful celebration of learning and engagement.



CHARACTER AND COMPETITION ON THE TENNIS COURT

Four Junior School students, Aarav, Dhruv, and Snithika from Grade 4, and Atharva from Grade 5, represented the Academy at the *Primary Years Programme Lawn Tennis Hyderabad Network Tournament 2026*, held on 30 and 31 January at The Gaudium School in Kollur. Dhruv and Snithika progressed to the semifinals, finishing in fourth place - a notable achievement at this level. Across matches, all four demonstrated resilience under pressure and a consistent commitment to fair play. Beyond the results, the tournament was a valuable learning experience. In their conduct on and off the court, the students reflected the values of character, discipline and integrity that the Academy seeks to instil.



SUPPORTING COMMUNITY ANIMAL WELFARE

As part of a Creativity, Activity and Service (CAS) project, DP 1 students took part in a Blue Cross anti-rabies vaccination and awareness camp in Bowrampet village, in Telangana's Medchal district. Working alongside veterinary doctors, the students assisted with vaccinations and engaged with residents to raise awareness about rabies prevention and responsible animal care. The experience provided practical insight into public health and community service, grounding abstract ideas in real-world practice. Students spoke of learning the value of teamwork, empathy and social responsibility, as well as gaining an understanding of preventive healthcare. Aligned with Sustainable Development Goals 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) and 4 (Quality Education), the initiative reflected service learning at its most effective: thoughtful, hands-on and rooted in real community needs.



INTER-HOUSE SPORTS

The Inter-House Basketball and Volleyball Competitions were held on Wednesday, bringing together Middle School and Senior School students for a day of competitive sport. The event formed part of the Academy's ongoing effort to promote physical fitness and sportsmanship. Basketball matches were organised for both Middle and Senior School students, while volleyball was played at the Senior School level. In Senior School basketball, Pandya House finished first, followed by Kakatiya, Mourya, and Nizam. In Middle School basketball, Nizam House secured first place, with Mourya in second; the remaining positions are yet to be decided. In Senior School volleyball, Mourya House placed third and Nizam House fourth. The first and second positions will be determined in the coming matches. These events reinforced the Academy's commitment to developing confident, principled young people who understand that how they play matters as much as the outcome!

THIS WEEK'S SPOTLIGHTS



GRADE 7 STUDENT SETS ANOTHER GUINNESS WORLD RECORD

Shardul Madhavaram of Grade 7K has set his second Guinness World Record, extending an already remarkable achievement. Having previously been recognised for reciting the most decimal digits of Euler's number in one minute, he has now raised the bar by delivering the same feat while simultaneously juggling three objects! The accomplishment demands an uncommon combination of abilities. It requires precision of memory, sustained concentration, and physical coordination. Shardul's achievement reflects habits developed over time: patience, perseverance and a willingness to practise well beyond the point of comfort. It stands as a reminder that excellence is rarely accidental, and that mastery often emerges at the intersection of curiosity and sustained effort. For the Academy, his success affirms our belief in nurturing individual passions, encouraging intellectual risk-taking, and supporting students as they discover the extent of their own capabilities.



LEARNING FROM THE GLOBAL STAGE

Samim Sheikh, a fellow in the Academy's *Teacher Preparation Programme*, recently attended two of India's most significant contemporary arts gatherings: the *International Theatre Festival of Kerala (ITFoK) 2026* and the *Kochi Biennale 2026*. Together, the festivals offered valuable exposure to global artistic practice and the kind of critical exchange that sits at the heart of serious creative work. ITFoK, known for bringing experimental and politically engaged theatre to Indian audiences, provided Samim with the opportunity to experience performances by internationally recognised practitioners. Productions such as *Frankenstein Project* from Argentina and the work of Luciya Joyce from Spain showcased innovative theatrical languages and contemporary explorations of movement, memory, and identity. Beyond the stage, the festival created space for dialogue, including a memorable encounter with Anand Patwardhan, one of India's most respected documentary filmmakers. At the Kochi Biennale, an event that has redefined how contemporary art is experienced in the region, Samim took part in a clowning workshop centred on physical awareness, presence, vulnerability, and non-verbal communication. The sessions underscored how play, discipline and embodiment can function as powerful tools for storytelling and learning, closely aligned with physical theatre practices. These experiences have deepened Samim's development as a theatre facilitator. They also reaffirm the Academy's belief in the arts as a vital space for reflection and global awareness.



RE-ENROLMENT FOR 2026/27

As we plan for the next academic year at the Academy, we are preparing to welcome your children back to campus on July 21, 2026. Please note that we require a timely notice if you intend to withdraw your child from the Academy at the end of the school year. If the notice is not given in writing to the Admissions Office by 28 February 2026, followed by a written acknowledgement by the Admissions Team, one term's fees in lieu of notice will be due. We appreciate your timely communication and your continued trust in the Academy.

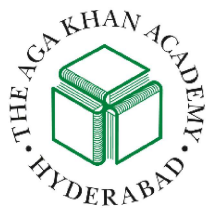
“The students at this institution will be distinguished not only for their academic capacity, but for their character and their commitment to citizenship.”

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

13 February 2026



Dear Parents,

In the middle of the twentieth century, when psychologists were busy measuring intelligence, one researcher kept asking a different kind of question. Instead of asking, “*How smart is this child?*” he asked something much more interesting: “*What really shapes the course of a child’s life?*” That researcher was Professor Benjamin Bloom, an American educational psychologist working at the University of Chicago. Most people associate him with something called *Bloom’s Taxonomy*. This explains that learning happens in stages. Children don’t just memorise facts; over time, they learn to understand them and eventually apply them in creative or independent ways. This framework is still widely used to describe how children learn and think.

But the work of his that interests me most had very little to do with frameworks or classifications, and far more to do with how children become who they are. It focused on something that has fascinated me over the years: how potential unfolds over time. Bloom spent years studying the lives of concert musicians, elite athletes, scientists and scholars.

He assumed he would find early signs of brilliance. For instance, children who were exceptional at a very young age or children whose lives were carefully engineered for success by their parents. Instead, he heard very different stories.

- A piano teacher who paused mid-lesson and said, *“You know, you might actually be rather good at this.”*
- A parent who noticed enjoyment rather than performance and said, *“Let’s keep going for a bit longer.”*
- A teacher who nudged expectations and said, *“I think you’re ready to try the next step.”*

What struck Bloom was how often excellence begins with a small moment of recognition. In most cases, the early years were entirely ordinary. Motivation came and went. Progress was slow, and children drifted in and out of interests, sometimes losing enthusiasm altogether. There was no indication that greatness lay ahead. What mattered most was that, at a particular moment, someone noticed something, named it, and offered just enough encouragement for the door to remain open.

This aligns very strongly with my own experience, both as a parent and a head of school. Over the past 40 years, I have worked with thousands of young people in schools around the world. I’ve seen children abandon something they once loved after a single throwaway comment - often not meant to hurt, but impacting the child that way nonetheless. I’ve also seen the opposite: a child persevering with an activity simply because an adult said, *“You’re making great progress – keep going.”* Nothing dramatic changed in that moment. But something shifted internally.

Bloom’s work reminds us that children’s lives are not shaped by a single decision or a dramatic breakthrough. They emerge through the interaction of many small influences and occasionally, sheer chance. Yet it’s remarkable how a single comment can subtly shift how a child sees themselves. This doesn’t mean that every piano lesson leads to a concert hall, or every childhood interest becomes a vocation. Most don’t, and that is exactly the point. The value lies not in predicting outcomes, but in keeping possibilities alive.

Bloom’s work invites us to take a gentle approach. We don’t need to map out a child’s future or optimise every decision. Often, our role as parents and educators is quieter and more subtle: to notice effort, to recognise interest, to name emerging strengths, and to offer just enough support for the next step to feel worth taking. In a world that encourages us to manage childhood as a project, Bloom reminds us of something deeply reassuring. Development is organic. It is relational. And it is beautifully sensitive to small moments. Futures are not engineered. They are cultivated, one interaction at a time.

Best wishes,

Jonathan Long

Dr Jonathan Long

THIS WEEK'S NEWS



Cultural Evening

21st Feb, Saturday

..... Amphitheater

6pm onwards



..... Featuring

D.Srinivas (*Veena*)

R Dinakar (*Violin*)

CH. Ramakrishna (*Mridangam*)

T.P.Balasubramaniam (*Ghatam*)

.....
A joint collaboration between
Student Life Department & Culture Department
.....

AN EVENING OF RESONANCE

Our newly constructed Amphitheatre will see the launch of a fresh chapter in the Academy's cultural life on Saturday, 21 February, with its first-ever classical music performance. At its centre will be Dhulipala Srinivas, one of India's most respected Carnatic veena maestros. With decades of experience as a lead performer, Srinivas is known for the depth and subtlety of his raga interpretation. His performances have taken him to major concert halls and festivals across India and beyond, including cultural platforms associated with embassies and the United Nations, where his artistry has been celebrated for its refinement and emotional resonance. He will be joined by an ensemble featuring the violin, mridangam and ghatam; instruments that create the rhythmic and melodic conversation at the heart of Carnatic music. We warmly invite members of our community to join us for this special evening – one that honours the renewal of a physical space and the living traditions that give it meaning. Kindly register your attendance using the [link](#) provided below. We're grateful to SPIC MACAY for their collaboration and support in making this cultural evening possible.

Guidelines for signing up

1. Day scholars in Grades 6-9 are required to be accompanied by a parent or guardian.
2. Day scholars MYP-5 (grade 10) / DPs are allowed to sign up on their own
3. Everyone should have their own mode of transport



A CHAMPION'S WELCOME

The Academy had the privilege of welcoming an exceptional young athlete this week — Esha Singh, an international shooter who has represented India. She became the youngest-ever national champion in the 10m pistol event when she was 13 years old. She is also a gold medallist at the ISSF World Cup and recently secured an outstanding three gold medals and one bronze at the Asian Championships. Our students were thrilled to interact with her. The Senior School attended an inspiring 30-minute talk in which Esha shared insights from her journey, including discipline, focus and resilience. In keeping with Junior School tradition, she was honoured with a spirited “Victory Walk”, as students lined the pathway to celebrate her remarkable achievements. We hope Esha’s visit inspires our students to embrace new challenges, pursue their passions with determination and strive for excellence in their unique journeys.



CLASSICAL COLLECTIVE LAUNCHED IN STYLE

Asad Khan ji, the internationally recognised sitarist, led a memorable performance at the Academy this evening, bringing together students, staff, parents, and guests for the inaugural edition of The Classical Collective. Joined by our talented Senior School Music Teacher, Mr Altamash Ansari on piano, and the accomplished Mr Kalpa Jyoti on tabla, he anchored a programme that moved thoughtfully across musical traditions and captivated the audience. Approached as a shared musical exchange, the performance flowed with ease between composed passages and improvisation. The concert offered a rare opportunity to encounter musicians of exceptional calibre at close range, setting a confident and inspiring tone for future editions of The Classical Collective!



BUILDING RESILIENCE: COPING WITH CHALLENGES

What does it mean to cope when things feel difficult, and where do we find the strength to keep going? These questions sat at the heart of a series of Personal, Social and Health Education sessions recently attended by students in Grades 6 to 8, focused on the theme "Coping with Challenges." Through guided reflection and discussion, students were encouraged to recognise their own personal strengths and consider how these qualities can support them when navigating moments of uncertainty or adversity. The conversations were enriched by the presence of guest speakers - Mr Christian, Ms Archana, Mr Arjun, Dr Leena and our DP 2 students, Farzam and Snehashi, who spoke candidly about their leadership journeys and the challenges they have encountered along the way. Grades 6 and 7 students engaged in reflective discussions rooted in real-life scenarios, Grade 8 students explored the theme more creatively, crafting Zen-style short stories that captured resilience, perspective and the quiet strength that emerges through challenge.



HOW A MUSICAL BUILDS MORE THAN A PERFORMANCE

In the Junior School, the days have begun to carry a familiar rhythm as rehearsals for the forthcoming Junior School Musical are underway! In one corner, Grade 5 students are refining their principal roles, learning their lines and the discipline of timing and teamwork. Nearby, the choir is finding its collective voice, tuning harmonies that will soon fill the stage. And then there are our youngest performers: Grades 1 and 2, stepping confidently into the spotlight, practising rhythm and movement for what will be their first appearance in the Academy's Broadway-style musical. Inviting our youngest students to take part in a production like this is no small thing. It reflects a Junior School culture that values inclusion, trust, and the belief that confidence grows when children are given meaningful responsibilities. Across age groups, students are learning to rely on one another; older pupils modelling leadership, younger ones discovering that they belong on the same stage. As rehearsals continue, the excitement is quietly building. There will be more to share soon from what promises to be a joyful and memorable musical journey.



A CULTURAL EXCHANGE THROUGH HYDERABAD'S HERITAGE

As part of their Heritage Walk, Exchange Programme students from Mombasa and Maputo stepped into the layered history of Hyderabad, visiting two of the city's most iconic landmarks. At Charminar, built in 1591, students encountered a living crossroads of trade, culture, and community, experiencing the vibrant rhythms of Old City life that continue to animate its surroundings. The visit to Chowmahallah Palace offered a contrasting glimpse into the city's regal past. Once home to the Nizams, the palace's blend of Persian, Mughal, and European influences reflected Hyderabad's long-standing cosmopolitan character. Together, these visits encouraged a deeper appreciation of the city's cultural complexity; insights that will inform the students' capstone projects as they complete the final weeks of their 11-week programme.



LEADING WITH PURPOSE

In a workshop that asked students to think less about titles and more about responsibility, MYP 4 students spent Tuesday exploring what leadership looks like in practice - messy, collaborative, and grounded in choice. Led by the MYP 4 advisory team alongside the Leadership Coordinator, the sessions moved beyond abstract ideas. Through a mix of interactive challenges students examined how teams function under pressure, how decisions are shaped by evidence as much as instinct, and how different leadership styles can strengthen - or strain - group dynamics. Students were encouraged to reflect on both individual and collective goals and to recognise leadership as a shared endeavour rather than a solitary role. By the end of the workshop, the emphasis was clear: effective leadership is built not on authority alone, but on trust, accountability, and the willingness to make thoughtful decisions together.



NEW BEGINNINGS IN THE OPEN SKY

By late afternoon last weekend, the sky above the campus had begun to change. What started as open blue slowly filled with colour and the drama of kites rising, dipping, and catching the wind - signalling the arrival of the community's much-anticipated Kite Festival. In Hyderabad, kite flying is closely associated with Makar Sankranti, the harvest festival that marks seasonal change and new beginnings. Kite flying has a long history in the region as a seasonal, communal practice - simple in form, but rich in meaning. On campus, the festival reflected that same spirit. Students and staff engaged in a tradition that rewards patience and coordination. In moments like these, the Academy's values are quietly affirmed: respect for cultural heritage, learning that extends beyond formal settings, and a community shaped as much by shared experience as by shared purpose.



TRANSFORMING IDEAS INTO ART

From 10 to 12 February, DP 2 students participated in an intensive three-day Fibre Casting Workshop, immersing themselves in exploring sculptural textures, techniques, and experimentation. During the workshop, students engaged in a comprehensive three-step process — clay modelling, Plaster of Paris mould-making and final fibre casting. This hands-on experience allowed them to understand the technical precision and creative possibilities involved in three-dimensional art practices. The workshop significantly strengthened their technical proficiency, creative thinking and process documentation skills, all of which are essential for the IB Diploma Visual Arts Exhibition.



PEDAL POWER!

The Academy's mountain bike trail saw some adrenaline-fueled action last Saturday when 32 students took part in an exciting in-house event! The event took place on trails that included Peacock Hill, the rock garden, jungle trail and the infamous snake trail. The course 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. The race saw an impressive display of grit and determination by the participants. Younger riders completed a 2.5 km lap, while our senior students completed two laps (5 km). A big thank you to Mr Ramesh and all the riders and supporters who contributed to making this event a great success.



GROWING GREEN, GROWING RESPONSIBLE

Organic farming is an important focus at the Academy, helping students understand environmentalism and sustainable living through hands-on learning. Last weekend, our DP 1 students put this into practice by checking the drip irrigation pipeline and nurturing the mango and coconut trees. The activity strengthened their sense of responsibility and teamwork while building practical knowledge of sustainable water management and plant care. It also deepened their understanding of Sustainable Development Goal 13 – Climate Action, reinforcing the importance of protecting and nurturing green spaces.



SERVICE WITH HEART

As part of their service learning programme, DP 1 students visited Rainbow Home Girls Orphanage, where they engaged thoughtfully with the children and offered meaningful support. Throughout the visit, students demonstrated compassion, responsibility, and a strong sense of commitment in their interactions. Experiences such as these deepen students' empathy, strengthen their understanding of social responsibility, and build awareness of the diverse needs within the wider community. The visit also aligned closely with Sustainable Development Goal 4: Quality Education, as students contributed to learning support and positive engagement. We extend our appreciation to both students and staff for their dedication and purposeful participation.

THIS WEEK'S SPOTLIGHT



BALANCING NATURE AND TECHNOLOGY IN EARLY YEARS

Ms Pratibha Thimmaraya, Head of the Centre for Educational Research, Innovation and Training, was invited by Education World to conduct a masterclass at the ECE National Conference in Bengaluru. Co-presented with Kausar Sayeed, founder of Learn2Lead, the session focused on “Reclaiming Childhood through Nature-Based Pedagogy in an AI-Driven World.” The conference explored how early childhood education can respond to the rapid growth of digital technologies while safeguarding the essence of childhood learning. Drawing on Indian and global research, the session highlighted the benefits of nature-based learning — from reduced stress and improved concentration to stronger environmental awareness — alongside the increasing presence of digital tools in young children’s lives. The emphasis was on finding a thoughtful balance that integrates technology with intentionality while remaining rooted in ecological and cultural contexts. The insights shared are especially relevant to our Academy as we continue to nurture learners who are both future-ready and meaningfully connected to the to their natural surroundings.



OUR JOURNEY TO ACCREDITATION BEGINS!

In the coming weeks, we will begin an important phase of our journey towards accreditation with the Middle States Association. A central part of this process is a whole-school self-study. This is an opportunity for us to reflect on what we do well, identify areas for growth, and ensure that the Academy continues to meet the highest international standards in education and student wellbeing. The self-study will begin with carefully designed surveys for students, parents and staff. Over the next few weeks, we will be sharing more information to help build understanding and awareness of this process before inviting your participation at the appropriate time. Your perspective is essential to this work and we look forward to engaging with you as we move forward together.

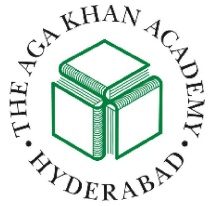
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His Late Highness Aga Khan IV

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

20 February 2026



This afternoon, the whole Academy gathered to inaugurate our new Amphitheatre, a space that promises to become a focal point for performance and shared celebration. Staff and students gathered in high spirits to mark the opening of a venue that will host concerts, theatre, assemblies and countless moments of collective memory. Some of our youngest students took to the stage, a reminder that this space ultimately belongs to them and to the generations who will follow. The amphitheatre is more than architecture. It is a place where voices are heard, confidence is tested and community is strengthened. We look forward to seeing this new stage filled with creativity in the months and years ahead.

Dear Parents,

We live in an age that equates busyness with worth. A full diary feels virtuous. A child who is constantly engaged appears productive. An adult who takes a break can feel guilty. But recent neuroscience research suggests that this instinct, though understandable, isn't quite correct.

Professor Daniel Levitin, a cognitive scientist at McGill University in Canada, has carried out fascinating research into how the brain pays attention to things. He says there are two main types of attention taking place in the brain: the "task-positive network" and the "task-negative network". The task-positive network is active when we are concentrating on something specific. It is the mode we use when solving a math problem, writing a report, revising for an exam or practicing a musical instrument. It is focused, goal-directed and disciplined. Schools work hard to strengthen this capacity in children.

The task-negative network, despite its slightly misleading name, is no less important. It becomes active when the mind wanders, when we daydream, reflect or simply allow our thoughts to drift. It can look like laziness from the outside. In reality, it is often when the brain is consolidating memory and generating new ideas.

What is striking is that these two networks do not operate at full strength at the same time. When the task-positive network is engaged, the task-negative network quiets down. When the mind is allowed to wander, focused attention reduces. Both are necessary. One helps us complete tasks. The other helps us think creatively and solve problems in deeper ways.

Many young people today spend most of their time in task-positive mode. Lessons, activities, homework and constant digital stimulation keep their attention externally directed. Over time, this can lead to fatigue and stress. What is often missing is space for the task-negative network to do its work. The same, of course, may be true for many of us as adults!

A few minutes of quiet reflection, time without a device, listening to music without multitasking, or even tolerating a little boredom can activate this wandering mode. Well-being is not about doing less. It is about rhythm. Our children need periods of focused

effort, but they also need periods of mental drift. Believe it or not, both are forms of thinking, and both are productive. Sometimes, the most valuable thing any of us can do is simply to pause and let the mind wander.

Best wishes,



Dr Jonathan Long

THIS WEEK'S NEWS



A MESSAGE FROM THE JUNIOR SCHOOL PRINCIPAL MS ARCHNA GERA

We look forward to interacting with you during the upcoming Parent-Teacher Meetings scheduled for **Saturday, February 28**. Due to several parent requests, the meeting slots

until afternoon tea break are now reserved for face-to-face meetings, and the slots from 2:30 to 4:00 pm are for online meetings.

Your child's homeroom teacher will share the Google Calendar links with you through the weekly updates. Please access the teachers' calendars to book your 15-minute meeting slot with your child's homeroom teacher and 10-minute slots with the single-subject teachers (Art, Music, PE, Swimming, Hindi and Telugu). The Music teacher's calendar will be open for online meetings on Sunday, February 29, only.

If you are unable to find a meeting slot with a teacher, or if you miss your scheduled slot due to unforeseen reasons, please share your questions with the respective teacher via email.

Please note that the purpose of this meeting is to provide an overview of your child's progress at school. We encourage parents to review their child's assessment folders and learning progressions prior to the meeting. The next date the assessment folders will be sent home is Friday, February 27, and the updated learning progressions will be shared on February 23.

We also look forward to seeing you in person at 6:00 pm on **March 12** for the Junior School Musical: *Peter Pan Jr.* Please note that we have scheduled a dress rehearsal on March 10. The schedule changes for March 10 and March 12 are outlined below:

March 10: Students are expected to arrive at school by 1:00 pm and depart at 7:00 pm. Buses will operate at modified times for both arrival and departure. The exact timings and pick-up and drop-off points will be communicated next week.

March 12: Students are expected to arrive at school by 1:00 pm and will depart with their parents after the Musical. Buses will operate at modified times for arrival only.

Families opting for personal transport will need to make arrangements according to these timings. On both days, students will eat lunch at home and will receive dinner boxes before departure.

Should this modified schedule present some significant challenges for your family, please write to your child's homeroom teacher to look for a workable solution.

Students have started taking home individualized notes for their costumes and payment details. We request that families make sure the payment is made in time so the costumes can be made ready within our timeline.

We are also working towards a grand stage, sound and lighting - all excitement will unveil very soon!



GRADE 1 ADVENTURERS

This week, our Grade 1 students enjoyed their first camp experience, an important milestone in the early years of school life. Using the Faculty Residence areas of our campus, the children immersed themselves in a carefully designed programme of outdoor exploration. Ziplining, commando nets and sack races were met with enthusiasm and energy. A magic show brought moments of wonder, while a refreshing swim offered welcome relief from the afternoon heat. In the familiarity of the campus setting, students were able to stretch themselves, try unfamiliar challenges and overcome small fears in a secure and supportive environment. By the end of the day, tired smiles spoke of achievement. Growth often begins in such modest but meaningful steps!



A LIVING LEGACY AT THE JUNIOR SCHOOL

History came alive this week in the Junior School with a visit from Ms Lakshmi Devi Raj, a 93-year-young historian whose life bridges the present and Hyderabad's royal past. As the daughter of the 7th Nizam's family physician, Ms Raj offered students a glimpse into a bygone era. Through recollections of palace visits, courtly etiquette and a personal conversation with the Nizam, she painted a portrait of a city shaped by grandeur and tradition. Ms Raj read excerpts from her newly published book, allowing students to hear history narrated in the voice of lived experience. In a touching gesture, her great-grandson presented a copy of the book to the Junior School Library, ensuring that her memories will continue to inform and inspire. Her visit reminded us that history is not merely a sequence of dates. It is a tapestry of stories carried within living memory, shaping our understanding of who we are.



EXCHANGE STUDENTS TREK BHONGIR FORT

This weekend, our exchange students travelled to Bhongir Fort, a 10th-century hilltop fortress built by the Western Chalukya ruler Tribhuvanamalla Vikramaditya VI. Rising from its distinctive monolithic rock formation, the fort stands as a striking testament to the region's architectural and military heritage. The climb to the top was tough, but shared effort has a way of dissolving differences and strengthening bonds. The experience deepened students' appreciation for India's rich past while reinforcing the values of camaraderie and resilience.



LEARNING FROM THE LAND

Sustainability is most powerful when it moves from theory to practice. This week, our DP 1 students harvested coconuts grown on campus and enjoyed fresh coconut water straight from the source. The activity offered more than refreshment. It provided hands-on insight into organic farming, stewardship of the land and the dignity of collective effort. Experiences like this remind us that education extends beyond the classroom. Responsibility, collaboration and respect for nature are lessons best learned through participation.



SENIOR SCHOOL INTER-HOUSE VOLLEYBALL FINALS

The Senior School Inter-House Volleyball Finals brought inter-house spirit and energy to the campus this week. Everyone looks forward to these lively events, and this week's finals were no exception! A closely contested match between Kakatiya House and Pandya House showcased teamwork and resilience of a high order. After an intense encounter, Kakatiya House secured first place, followed by Pandya, Maurya and Nizam Houses. The tournament strengthened the values of respect and collaboration that underpin these spirited inter-house competitions.



PINKATHON HYDERABAD 2026

On 15 February, more than 5,000 women gathered at People's Plaza for the sixth edition of Pinkathon Hyderabad, an event founded by Milind Soman to promote women's health and fitness. The Academy was proud to participate, with over 30 students and teachers joining the 5-kilometre run. Their presence reflected our commitment to holistic development, where physical wellbeing stands alongside academic achievement. Running in solidarity with thousands of others, our participants experienced the powerful combination of community, purpose and shared endeavour. Health, like learning, flourishes when nurtured collectively.



LEARNING THROUGH COMPETITION

Last weekend's sporting fixtures were a reminder that sport's greatest lessons are rarely confined to the scoreboard. Our Under-14 Boys' Cricket Team faced MSK Cricket Club in a 30-over practice match, chasing a formidable total of 221. Though the target proved elusive, the contest demanded composure under pressure. The following day, the Under-18 Football Team met ORO Sports Football Club in preparation for the upcoming league. The 5-1 result wasn't what we hoped for, but the experience was a good chance to build some team cohesion. Across both fixtures, the true victory lay in personal growth. Competitive sport tests character as much as skill and offers young people a structured space in which to learn discipline and integrity.



THIS WEEK'S STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



A PHILOSOPHICAL EXPLORATION

Intellectual life at the Academy extends beyond formal curriculum. This week, Pranav Paruchuri of DP 2 delivered a thoughtful presentation to the DP 1 Higher Level English cohort titled *Methods in Mundaneness*. Drawing on his Extended Essay on Don DeLillo's *White Noise*, Pranav examined themes of grief, mortality and artistic truth in a media-saturated age. His reflections, enriched by references to Martin Heidegger, invited students to reconsider the significance of the everyday and the redemptive power of attention. The session left its audience reflecting on how literature illuminates not only extraordinary events but the quiet textures of ordinary life.



THE DISCIPLINE OF MUSIC

At this week's Senior School assembly, we paused to consider what sustained musical training does for young people beyond the pleasure of performance. We were honoured to welcome Ms Sonia Khan, Head of ABRSM India, who spoke about the discipline and resilience cultivated through structured musical study. Technical proficiency is only one dimension. Serious musical engagement demands patience, attentive practice and perseverance. It shapes character as much as sound. The assembly opened with a poised performance by Grade 8 student Arunima Ghosh, who presented *La Tarantelle* by Friedrich Burgmüller with clarity and expressive maturity. Excellence, her performance reminded us, is built through deliberate effort. The Academy continues to strengthen its ABRSM pathway across piano, voice, classical guitar, saxophone, trumpet and violin. Music teaches young people to listen carefully, practise patiently and aspire beyond the ordinary. Its lessons resonate long after the final note fades.

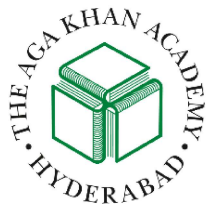
“The students at this institution will be distinguished not only for their academic capacity, but for their character and their commitment to citizenship.”

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

25 February 2026



SAVE THE DATE

We warmly invite you to an enchanting evening
of Qawwali by the legendary Warsi Brothers.

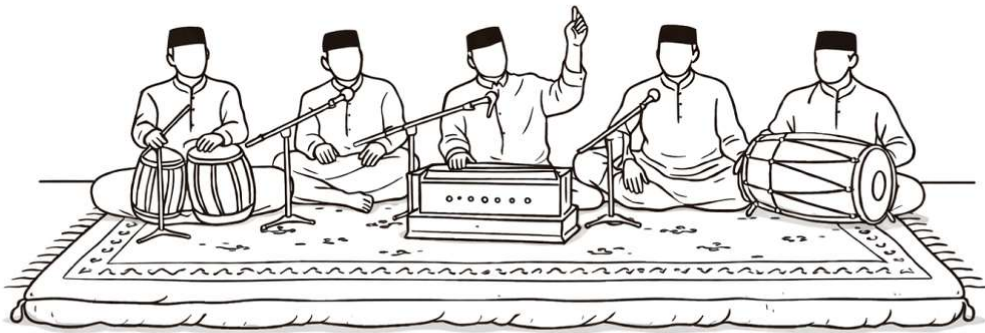
MARCH

FRIDAY

06

7:00PM

@ the Amphitheatre, Aga Khan Academy Hyderabad



Dear Staff,

We are delighted to invite you to ***Dastaan-e-Qamar*** – an evening of music and cultural celebration featuring the Warsi Brothers, one of India's finest Qawwali groups. Their music will bring to life the beauty of Qawwali, blending poetic expression with melodic brilliance.

This special event is presented as part of the Academy's *Cultural Collective*, an initiative that brings diverse cultures to our stage through traditional and timeless art forms. We invite you to join us for this vibrant musical journey.

Date: Friday, 6 March 2026

Time: 7:00 pm onwards

Venue: Amphitheatre, Aga Khan Academy Hyderabad

Seating is limited and will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. To confirm attendance, please **RSVP by 6 pm on Sunday, 1 March 2026**, using the following link:

<https://forms.gle/XfRukJdwL7kEBmXB8>

We look forward to welcoming you to what promises to be a memorable evening!

Best wishes,

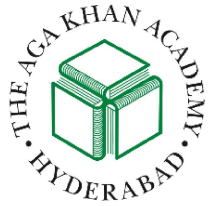
Dr Jonathan Long and Mr Arjun Puri

Head of Academy & Dean of Admissions

[from this list.](#)



THE AGA KHAN ACADEMY
HYDERABAD



from the desk of the
Head of Academy

27 February 2026



As the Student Representative Council of 2025-26 prepares to pass the baton, the Academy extends its heartfelt gratitude for their dedication, integrity and leadership throughout the year. Their commitment to amplifying student voice and strengthening community spirit has set a meaningful benchmark. The incoming council will undoubtedly learn from their example and carry these responsibilities forward with the same passion and purpose.

Dear Parents,

Over the past few years, I have noticed something interesting, and I would not be surprised if many of you have noticed it too. Children today generally speak more openly about their inner experiences than was the case in previous generations. They talk freely about anxiety and are not embarrassed to admit when they are stressed. Research suggests this is not simply a passing impression. There has been a genuine shift in how young people understand and share their inner lives.

Recent psychological studies show that young people are becoming more emotionally aware and more able to express what is happening within them. This is hardly surprising. Schools like ours now teach social and emotional learning more explicitly. Families speak more openly about mental health. Well-being is part of the vocabulary of childhood in a way that it was not a generation ago.

When children can name an emotion, it can help regulate the body's stress response and reduce impulsive reactions. The renowned neuroscientist Dr Daniel Siegel uses the phrase "*name it to tame it*" to describe how labelling powerful emotions such as fear, anger or anxiety can lessen their intensity. When we put words to what we are experiencing, the brain's activity shifts from the reactive amygdala to the more reflective prefrontal cortex. This simple act supports emotional regulation and helps reduce feelings of being overwhelmed.

Yet emotional awareness on its own is not the same as emotional resilience. Being able to identify an emotion is an important first step, but children also need guidance in how to manage those emotions and move through them. The deeper question for us as adults is how we help young people develop the steadiness and perspective that allow them not only to name what they are experiencing, but to respond to it wisely.

Across decades of psychological research, one finding stands out consistently. The single most important factor in a child's long-term emotional well-being is the quality of the adult-child relationship. This doesn't mean it has to be perfect. But it does mean sustaining a warm, calm and steady presence.

Children learn emotional regulation less from what we instruct and more from what we embody. Our own relationship with frustration, disappointment and uncertainty quietly shapes theirs. When we respond with steadiness rather than alarm, with curiosity rather

than panic, we are teaching something far more powerful than any script. We are showing them that difficult emotions can be understood and navigated.

It may be true that this generation is more emotionally articulate than those that came before it. That is something to welcome. But articulation must be accompanied by perspective. Emotions are real and important, yet they are also temporary. The invitation for us as parents and educators is simple. Create space for honest conversation. Listen without rushing to solve. Model calm when things feel unsettled. Remind our children, gently and consistently, that they are bigger than any passing wave of anxiety or frustration.

If we can do that, we help them move beyond merely naming what they feel. We help them develop the quiet confidence that whatever arises within them can be managed with wisdom and strength.

Holiday on Wednesday 4th March

As mentioned on our *2025/26 Key Dates Calendar*, Wednesday 4th March will be a school holiday on the occasion of Holi. Happy Holi greetings to all those who will be celebrating this special festival. May a spirit of unity, renewal and happiness fill your hearts and homes!

Best wishes,



Dr Jonathan Long

THIS WEEK'S NEWS



VOICES OF LEADERSHIP: STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL ELECTIONS 2026

Last week, the Academy's Student Representative Council elections took place as an expression of student voice in action. Students contested roles as School Presidents, Action, Expression and Academic Representatives, and as Residential and Day Representatives – each role a declaration of responsibility. Nominees suggested proposals aimed at strengthening student well-being, deepening academic engagement and enriching residential life. The speeches reflected a maturity that speaks to the culture of the Academy. A carefully designed voting process ensured transparency and fairness, with students and staff participating together in the ballot. Those elected will formally assume office in the new academic year. The elections themselves have become part of a valued tradition, inviting students to practise democracy as lived experience and to discover that leadership demands accountability, integrity and service.



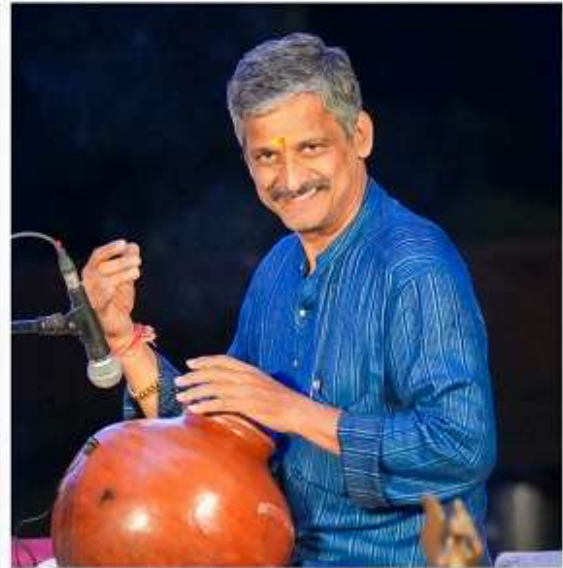
INTRODUCING OUR STUDENT PRESIDENTS FOR 2026–27

We are pleased to introduce Shastha and Sreekhar as our newly elected Student Presidents. Known for their steadiness of character and thoughtful engagement with their peers, they will assume their roles in July when the school reopens. We congratulate them and look forward to the energy and perspective they will bring to the year ahead.



AT THE QUTUB SHAHI TOMBS

For Grade 2 students, a recent visit to the Qutub Shahi Tombs offered a first encounter with history at a monumental scale. The domes and arches, rising with quiet grandeur against the Hyderabad sky, became entry points into another era. Guided through the complex, the children learned how the Qutub Shahi dynasty shaped the region's cultural landscape. The tombs' distinctive synthesis of Persian, Indian and Mughal influences sparked curiosity and wonder in equal measure. The students also appreciated the Aga Khan Trust for Culture's efforts to restore the tombs and uphold the beauty of this remarkable piece of history. What might otherwise have remained an abstract lesson took on texture and immediacy through direct experience.



AN EVENING OF CLASSICAL HARMONY

On 21 February, the newly renovated Amphitheatre hosted its first classical music recital, a milestone moment in the Academy's Cultural Collective initiative. Veena maestro Dhulipla Srinivas, accompanied by violin, mridangam and ghatam, offered a performance of remarkable depth and subtlety. The interplay between instruments created a textured, meditative soundscape that held the audience in quiet attentiveness. Students and faculty alike described the evening as memorable and inspiring. We are grateful to SPIC MACAY for partnering with us to bring this performance to our campus.



A SHARED JOURNEY INTO CULTURE AND CONNECTION

Residential and Exchange Programme students recently visited the Jagannath Puri Temple in Hyderabad, an experience that combined spiritual encounter with cultural exploration. Moving through the temple's serene spaces, observing rituals and learning about its history, students gained insight into traditions that continue to shape local life. For international students in particular, the visit offered an authentic window into India's living heritage. Shared experiences of this kind deepen understanding and quietly strengthen bonds within our community.



ONE HUNDRED DAYS TO GRADUATION

The Class of 2026 gathered recently to mark “100 Days to Graduation” — an occasion that combines celebration and reflection. The assembly was filled with laughter and memory: first days on campus, unexpected friendships, setbacks overcome and ambitions discovered. As the countdown to Graduation begins in earnest, the moment served as a reminder that Graduation marks a threshold in a much longer journey, one in which the Academy will always remain part of their story.



MINISTER'S VISIT AND NATIONAL PARTNERS MEET AT THE ACADEMY

On Tuesday, the Academy had the honour of welcoming Smt. D Anasuya Seethakka, Minister for Panchayat Raj & Rural Development (including Rural Water Supply), and Women & Child Welfare in the Government of Telangana. She visited the campus as the keynote speaker for the inauguration of the Aga Khan Foundation National Partners Meet, convened in connection with the Telangana Inclusive Livelihoods Programme (TGILP). Over three days, 75 participants, including senior government officials and representatives from leading national and international development organisations, gathered on campus for dialogue, review and collaboration. In her inaugural address, Minister Seethakka spoke about the realities of rural governance, water access and the empowerment of women through community-based institutions. As a young woman, she was drawn into the Naxalite movement and spent several years as an armed revolutionary in the forests of what is now Telangana. In time, she chose a different course, returning to education, entering democratic politics and ultimately serving in public office. Her transition from insurgency to elected leadership stands as a powerful story of personal transformation and a commitment to advancing social justice within constitutional frameworks. Her presence set a purposeful tone for the meeting. The gathering served both as a serious forum for policy engagement and as a visible expression of the Aga Khan Development Network's continuing commitment to equity, inclusion and social development.

THIS WEEK'S SPOTLIGHTS



MORE THAN A LEAGUE: A JOURNEY OF GROWTH AND BELONGING

When I think about my journey with Varsity Sports League Hyderabad, I feel deep gratitude. I joined just before Grade 9 as a volunteer during the second basketball season, simply eager to help and understand how things worked behind the scenes. I had no idea it would become such a defining part of my school life.

Attending nearly every game drew me into the world of sport in a new way. I began to see that competition is about far more than winning; it is about discipline, teamwork, resilience and shared purpose. Over the past few years, I have watched volleyball, basketball and football seasons unfold, each with its own energy and challenges. Seeing Varsity grow across sports has been as rewarding as growing with it.

What began as volunteering has evolved into leadership. Now serving as one of the heads, I have taken on greater responsibility — coordinating communication, supporting teams and ensuring that each season runs smoothly. This year, with our boys' football team competing, the experience feels especially personal. Contributing to their journey, even behind the scenes, fills me with pride.

Varsity has become such a central part of my identity that many people know me simply as "Lokapriya from Varsity." That association means a great deal to me. The league has strengthened my confidence, sharpened my communication skills and given me a true sense of belonging. What started as a small opportunity has grown into something that has

shaped who I am — and I am proud to continue that journey.



A SWING TOWARDS SUCCESS

The Academy warmly congratulates Vivaan Pinnapureddy of Grade 7H on securing first place in the Junior Tournament at the Hyderabad Golf Club on 22 February. Competing with composure and determination, Vivaan demonstrated technical skill and exemplary sportsmanship. We celebrate his achievement and look forward to the tournaments that lie ahead!



PROFESSIONAL LEARNING IN ACTION

Three members of the Junior School faculty — Ms Anjum, Ms Krati and Ms Meesha — recently attended an IB workshop at Stonehill International School in Bengaluru, centred on leadership as a core educational value. Through collaborative inquiry and reflective dialogue, the workshop explored leadership not as title or hierarchy, but as daily practice: the choices teachers make, the relationships they cultivate, the example they set. Our colleagues returned with renewed clarity and practical strategies to strengthen leadership within their classrooms and across the school community.



RETHINKING TECHNOLOGY

The Academy's *Centre for Educational Research, Innovation and Training* (CERT) hosted a two-day workshop for Master of Education students from the University of Hyderabad, led by Ms Tharuni Arkathala, master trainer in mathematics. In a digital landscape crowded with applications and platforms, the focus was deliberate: how to use technology in ways that deepen learning rather than dilute it. Participants examined how digital tools can genuinely transform understanding and when they simply substitute for analogue practice. Hands-on exploration of virtual simulations underscored both the cognitive possibilities and the limits of technology. The workshop affirmed that thoughtful integration is the measure of educational innovation.



FROM THE JUNIOR SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

We look forward to welcoming families to the Broadway musical *Peter Pan Jr.* on Thursday, 12 March at 6:30 pm in the Amphitheatre. Owing to limited seating, we are only able to accommodate up to three members per family. An RSVP link and further details will be shared via email. Please note that due to the late departure on 12 March, the Junior School will remain closed on Friday, 13 March. The Senior School will operate as usual.



SAVE THE DATE

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of Qawwali by the legendary Warsi Brothers.

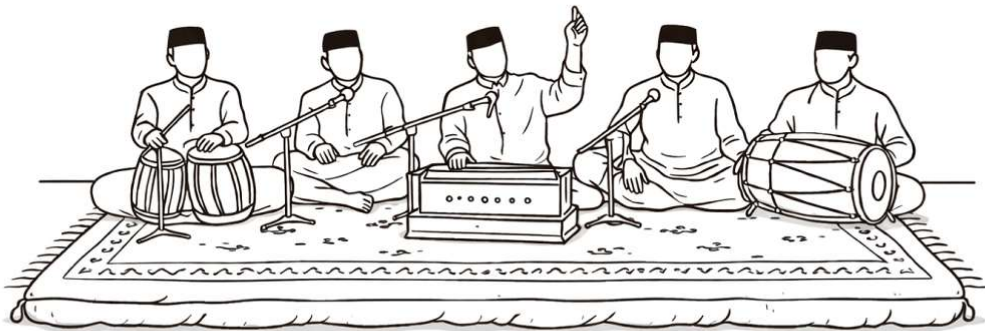
MARCH

FRIDAY

06

7:00PM

@ the Amphitheatre, Aga Khan Academy Hyderabad



AN INVITATION: DASTAAN-E-QAMAR

We are delighted to invite you to *Dastaan-e-Qamar*, an evening of music featuring the renowned Warsi Brothers, among India's most celebrated Qawwali ensembles. Presented as part of the Academy's Cultural Collective, the event promises an exploration of poetic devotion and musical virtuosity.

Date: Friday, 6 March 2026

Time: 7:00 pm onwards

Venue: Amphitheatre, Aga Khan Academy Hyderabad

Seating is limited and will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. Please RSVP by 6:00 pm on Sunday, 1 March 2026, using the link shared via email. High tea will be served at 6:20 pm, with arrangements in place for those observing Roza.

We look forward to welcoming you to what promises to be an evening of resonance and reflection.

“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



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