

from the desk of the
Head of Academy

6 March 2026



Dear Parents,

Our campus was filled with colour on Wednesday as students and staff celebrated Holi. Watching the celebrations, I was reminded of something important about schools. Great schools are not only places of intellectual challenge. They are also places filled with energy and joy.

The educational thinker Sir Ken Robinson often argued that schools should do more to nurture qualities of joy and curiosity. He said that creativity is as important in education as literacy and that we should treat it with the same status. Children are naturally inclined to imagine possibilities and try things out. They are not afraid to make mistakes along the way. As Sir Ken Robinson famously put it, if we are not prepared to be wrong, we will rarely come up with anything original.

Sir Ken Robinson illustrated this point with a story about a young girl he once saw in a classroom. She was sitting quietly at the back of the room, completely absorbed in a drawing. The teacher noticed how focused she was and eventually asked what she was drawing. "I'm drawing a picture of God," the girl replied. The teacher gently explained that nobody really knows what God looks like. Without pausing or looking up from her work, the girl calmly replied, "They will in a minute."

Sir Ken Robinson loved this story because it captures something essential about children. They instinctively approach the world with imagination. They are willing to try things out and see where their ideas take them. In the early years of life, children rarely worry about whether their thinking is unconventional. They simply explore.



Rabindranath Tagore believed that education should nurture imagination and a sense of harmony with the world rather than becoming a mechanical process of memorising information. For Tagore, schools should be places where curiosity, beauty and joy flourish naturally. The philosopher Jiddu Krishnamurti expressed a similar idea when he warned that learning cannot flourish in an

atmosphere dominated by fear and pressure. Genuine learning, he argued, begins when young people feel free to explore and discover for themselves.

A joyful school is not a frivolous one. On the contrary, when students feel happy and secure, they are far more willing to engage deeply in learning. When students are comfortable asking unusual questions, challenging assumptions or testing new ideas, real learning begins to take place.

If education can enable young people to retain their playfulness as much as it allows them to reach out toward adult seriousness, it will have carried an astonishing potential forward. The author Tom Robbins captured the essence of this well when he wrote, "Humanity has advanced, when it has advanced, not because it has been sober, responsible, and cautious, but because it has been playful, rebellious, and immature."

It isn't easy as a parent or a teacher to value play in a world that emphasises the importance of work above all else. We often miss the vital connection between play and learning. The well-known educator and television host Fred Rogers expressed this beautifully when he said, "Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children, play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood."

Perhaps, beneath the colours and laughter of Holi lies something deeper: the reminder that playfulness is not a distraction from life's serious work but part of what makes it meaningful.

Best wishes,

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

Dr Jonathan Long

THIS WEEK'S NEWS



PARENT SURVEY

We have launched our journey towards accreditation by the *Middle States Association*. A key part of this process is hearing from you directly. Your perspective as parents is invaluable. It helps us understand what we are doing well and where we can continue to improve. We would be grateful if you could take a few minutes to complete the MSA Stakeholder Survey, which can be accessed using the link sent to you by email and on Managebac.



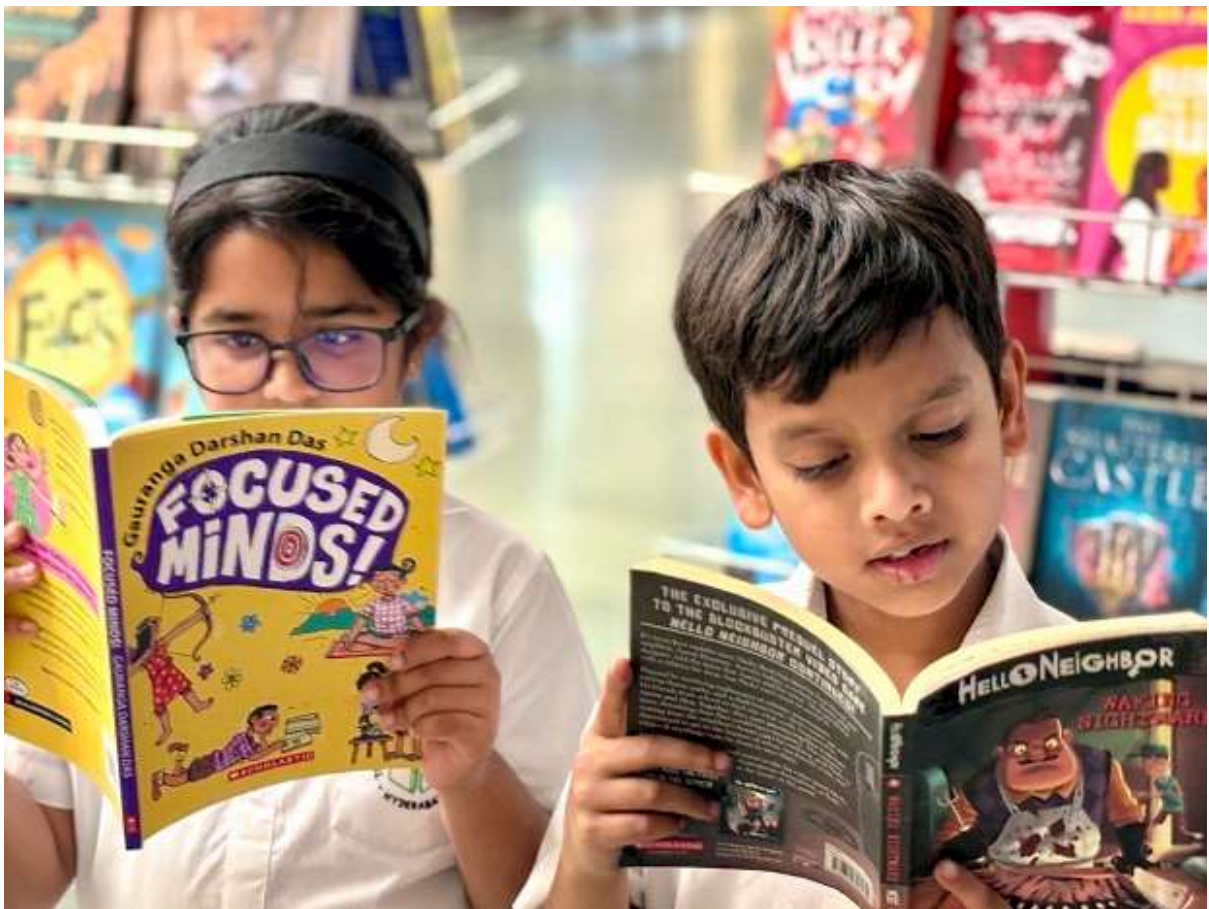
SPLASH OF COLOURS

Last weekend, residential students came together on campus to celebrate Holi in a vibrant display of colour and joy. After eagerly anticipating the festival all week, the community gathered for a lively celebration filled with laughter and playful bursts of colour. Holi, the Indian festival that marks the arrival of spring, symbolises renewal and the triumph of good over evil, with roots in Hindu mythology. The celebration brought students and staff together in a spirit of festivity, strengthening bonds and creating joyful memories that will be cherished for years to come.



THE COUNTDOWN IS ON

Excitement is building in the Junior School as preparations intensify for next week's production. Students and staff have been working tirelessly to bring the performance to life, rehearsing lines, songs and choreography with energy and enthusiasm. Pirates and lost boys are locked in playful rivalry, while fairies and mermaids enchant audiences with music and dance. We look forward to welcoming the Academy community next week for what promises to be a truly delightful performance.



JUNIOR SCHOOL BOOK LOVERS

The Scholastic Book Fair recently visited the Junior School, offering students the opportunity to explore and select books that capture their imagination. Reading for pleasure plays a vital role in a child's development. When children discover books they genuinely enjoy, they begin to see reading not as a task but as an adventure. Picture books, puzzles, comics and even the occasional unusual or unexpected title can spark curiosity and enthusiasm. When children are free to choose what they read, their confidence grows and their horizons expand. Over time, many develop a love of exploring new genres and styles, building lifelong reading and learning habits.



VOICES OF TRADITION: THE WARSI BROTHERS IN CONCERT

The haunting rhythms and soaring vocals of classical qawwali filled the amphitheatre this evening as the Warsi Brothers delivered a powerful performance for the Academy community. Naseer and Nazeer Ahmed Khan Warsi belong to a lineage that traces back more than seven centuries to the celebrated poet and musician Amir Khusrau. Trained by their grandfather, Padma Shri Aziz Ahmad Khan Warsi, they represent the Delhi Gharana tradition and are widely regarded as among the last *qawwal bachhey* - families who have preserved this devotional musical tradition through generations of oral transmission. Their ancestors once served as court musicians to the Nizam of Hyderabad. The brothers are also recipients of the prestigious Aga Khan Music Award, established by His Late Highness Aga Khan IV to recognise artists who sustain and transmit significant musical traditions. The Academy is deeply grateful to the Warsi Brothers for sharing this extraordinary cultural heritage with us in such an inspiring and memorable evening of classical qawwali.



A STRONG START: ACADEMY'S FIRST DEBATE COMPETITION

The Academy hosted its first debate competition on Saturday, 28 February, marking an exciting milestone for student discourse and public speaking. Students from Grades 8 to DP1 participated, many stepping into competitive debating for the first time. Using the British Parliamentary format, participants engaged in four challenging rounds, debating pressing human rights issues before a compelling final on the role of religious symbols in secular public spaces. Organised by DP1 students Ayaan Gampala and Shreekar Kandula, the event showcased impressive argumentation, confidence and intellectual curiosity, setting a promising foundation for debate at the Academy.



NAVIGATING ADOLESCENCE THROUGH SELF-AWARENESS AND RESILIENCE

Adolescence is a formative period during which young people develop their identities while reflecting on their values and beliefs. Supporting students during this transition requires creating spaces where they feel able to express themselves and explore who they wish to become. The Personal Social Health Education module *Navigating Adolescence*, conducted on 3 March, provided students with an opportunity to engage with topics such as self-esteem, peer pressure and the influence of media on self-perception. Through discussions, role plays and creative activities, students reflected on the challenges of adolescence and considered how they can respond thoughtfully and constructively. The sessions encouraged students to recognise that every challenge can become a valuable learning experience.



LEARNING FROM GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT LEADERS

On Thursday, 27 February, DP1 and DP2 students studying Global Politics and Economics had the opportunity to engage with two distinguished development practitioners: Dr Gregory Chen, Managing Director of the Ultra Poor Graduation Initiative at BRAC International, and Paul Lusembo, Head of Business Growth at BRAC Uganda Bank Limited. The interaction was facilitated by Tinni Sawhney, CEO of the Aga Khan Foundation, India. Students participating in the session were selected as part of their IB coursework on development, with some having conducted field research on development initiatives in Telangana. The discussion provided valuable insight into global strategies addressing poverty, equity and social development. Students also posed thoughtful questions, deepening their understanding of real-world development challenges. Such experiential learning opportunities play an important role in nurturing ethical and globally minded leaders capable of contributing meaningfully to their communities and the wider world.



LEARNING HISTORY THROUGH LIVED EXPERIENCE

The Humanities Department recently organised a series of interviews and panel discussions as part of the unit on *Borders and Migration*. In one session, Ms Archna Gera, Ms Madhu Bhargava and Mr Samim Akhter Sheikh shared their families' experiences of the Partition of India and Pakistan. Their stories helped students understand the human dimensions of this historic moment and the lasting impact it has had on identity and memory. A second session explored the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Panellists included Ms Vyjayanti Vasanta Mogli from THITS (Telangana Hijra Intersex Transgender Samiti) and Mr Dinesh Chowdary from BRS (Bharat Rashtra Samiti), who offered perspectives drawn from governance, political leadership and grassroots experience. These conversations allowed students to connect historical events with lived experience. Through listening, questioning and reflection, students strengthened key MYP Approaches to Learning skills, including critical thinking, communication and collaboration, while engaging deeply with themes of pluralism, ethics and civic responsibility.

THIS WEEK'S SPOTLIGHTS



A MUSICAL MILESTONE

The Academy is delighted to congratulate Aryan on successfully passing the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music Grade 6 Piano Performance Examination. Balancing academic commitments with musical practice, Aryan has demonstrated dedication and perseverance in developing his talents. The Academy also acknowledges the encouragement and guidance of Mr Altamash, whose mentorship has supported Aryan's growth and confidence as a young musician.



A RECORD-BREAKING YOUNG MIND

The Academy proudly celebrates the remarkable achievement of Shardul Madhavaram of Grade 7, who has earned three Guinness World Records for feats of mathematical memory and number recitation. These accomplishments reflect extraordinary concentration, discipline and a deep enthusiasm for mathematics. Achieving multiple world records at such a young age is a truly impressive milestone, and we congratulate Shardul on this exceptional accomplishment.



A CENTURY TO REMEMBER

The Academy congratulates Tanush Rathore on an outstanding cricketing achievement. Representing Master Cricket Academy in an Under-16 match against Stumps Cricket Academy on 27 February, Tanush delivered a superb performance, scoring an unbeaten 101 from 125 balls. His innings included 15 elegant boundaries and demonstrated patience, technical skill and determination. This memorable century stands as a testament to his dedication and sportsmanship on the field.



CONTRIBUTING TO THE GLOBAL ENCOUNTERS PROGRAMME

Ms Pratibha Thimmaraya, Head of the Centre for Educational Research, Innovation and Training (CERT), was recently invited to attend the Global Encounters Content Development Meeting at the Aga Khan Centre in London. She participated in her capacity as Education Manager for the upcoming Global Encounters camps. Global Encounters is an international residential programme that brings young people from around the world together at the Academy during summer and winter breaks. The programme focuses on leadership, service, cultural exchange and global citizenship. A central component is community-based service learning, through which participants collaborate with local schools and community organisations. Academy teachers also serve as Service-Learning Educators, making the programme an important professional development opportunity. The London meeting provided an opportunity to reflect on previous camps and shape future programming, including discussions on the Global Encounters Leadership Framework, the responsible integration of artificial intelligence and approaches to supporting youth well-being.



ACADEMIC RECOGNITION AT NATIONAL SEMINAR

We are pleased to share that Mr Chandrakant Shinde, Senior School Hindi teacher, was invited by Dr Arvind Telang College, Pune (affiliated with Savitribai Phule Pune University) to serve as Session Chair at the National Seminar on Hindi Translated Literature. The session, titled *My Journey to Russia*, provided an engaging platform for dialogue with scholars and participants. This invitation reflects Mr Shinde's expertise and academic contribution in the field of Hindi literature. The Academy congratulates him on this well-deserved recognition.



DP2 VISUAL ART EXHIBITION

Morphe

FORM IS NEVER FIXED. IT IS ALWAYS BECOMING

**ALYN HIRANI
MUSKAAN BARDAI
JITISRI VENNAPUSA**

**SNEHANSHI MITHANI
NISSO PRASUN
AWANTHI BOLLAMPALLY**

12 & 13 MARCH 2026

INAUGURATION ON 12 AT 10:30 AM

VENUE- STUDENT LOUNGE

CHEIF GUEST- DR. PRITI SAMYUKTA

ASSOCIATE PROF, FULBRIGHT NEHRU
POSTDOC FELLOW & HEAD,
DEPARTMENT OF PAINTING, COLLEGE
OF FINE ARTS, JNAFAU

PRESENTED BY ART DEPARTMENT AGA KHAN ACADEMY HYDERABAD

MORPHE: DP2 VISUAL ARTS EXHIBITION

Morphe, the DP2 Visual Arts Exhibition, will take place on 12 and 13 March, with the inauguration scheduled for 10:30 am at the Student Lounge. The exhibition marks the culmination of two years of creative exploration by DP2 Visual Arts students. The works on display reflect sustained inquiry, experimentation and individual artistic expression. Students have explored a wide range of media,

including clay modelling, site-specific installations, sculpture, painting and graphic-based two-dimensional works. Through this process, they have developed both technical skills and conceptual thinking while documenting their artistic journeys. The exhibition represents the official IB Diploma Visual Arts component and offers a compelling window into the creativity and dedication of our students.

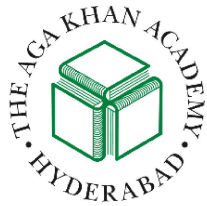
“The students at this institution will be distinguished not only for their academic capacity, but for their character and their commitment to citizenship.”

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 March 2026



Dear Parents,

As the festival of Eid approaches, we extend our warmest wishes to all families in our community who will be celebrating this special occasion. We also send festive greetings to families who celebrated Ugadi this week! May this special time be filled with joy, reflection and togetherness. With the mid-term break beginning from today, we look forward to welcoming students back to class on Monday, 23rd March.

Have you noticed how reassuring strong opinions can sometimes feel? People who speak with confidence can appear very convincing. In fact, we often admire people who express their views with conviction. Their certainty can feel like strength.

Anyone who spends time online will recognise this. Social media platforms reward certainty. Algorithms amplify angry or provocative posts. Carefully reasoned arguments travel slowly, while confident opinions spread quickly. The result is an environment that encourages us to see the world as right or wrong, good or bad, us or them.

The social psychologist Jonathan Haidt believes this environment is reshaping the way young people grow up. He suggests that social media has contributed to what he calls a “rewiring of childhood.” Young people today are growing up in a world where public debate becomes a performance, and where expressing strong opinions attracts attention and approval.

The difficulty, of course, is that the real world rarely fits into such simple categories. The most important issues are complicated. They involve competing values, incomplete evidence and genuine disagreement. Helping young people navigate that complexity is one of the most important tasks we face in education.

If children are to thrive, they will need far more than knowledge. When knowledge is always at our fingertips, the real challenge is to know how to make sense of it. Children need the ability to evaluate evidence, to question their own assumptions and the patience to listen to people who think differently from them. Most importantly, they need the humility to recognise that their own views may sometimes be incomplete.

This doesn't align with the way we often think about education. Schools are associated with answers, and students are expected to study hard to produce the correct solutions. Yet genuine learning often begins in a different place. It begins with uncertainty. It begins in recognising that the most interesting questions rarely have simple answers. It encourages young people to think independently rather than simply absorbing the loudest voices around them.

Jonathan Haidt suggests that good education should function like an “intellectual gym.” Just as muscles grow stronger through resistance, minds grow stronger through encountering ideas that challenge them. Learning to engage thoughtfully and respectfully with disagreement is part of becoming an educated person.

When I think back to my days as a teacher, some of the most precious moments were when a student began to reconsider a position they once held with great confidence. That shift does not represent weakness. Quite the opposite. It reflects intellectual maturity. It shows that the student is thinking. As parents and educators, we carry an important responsibility. Alongside building knowledge, we must help young people develop the habits of mind that allow them to engage constructively with a complex world. This means valuing curiosity rather than dogmatism, reflection rather than reaction and listening rather than shouting.

In an age when many public conversations reward certainty, these qualities seem unfashionable. Yet they may prove to be among the most important strengths our children can possess. Education at its best does not produce young people who believe they have all the answers. Instead, it nurtures individuals who have the confidence to listen carefully and to reconsider their views when new understanding emerges. And in a world that often rushes toward simple conclusions, the courage to remain thoughtfully uncertain may be one of the greatest gifts we can give our children.

Best wishes,

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

Dr Jonathan Long

THIS WEEK'S NEWS



A MAGICAL EVENING IN NEVERLAND

Yesterday evening, the newly revamped Amphitheatre was transformed into a magical stage as the Junior School presented Peter Pan Jr. The beautifully decked-up venue set the scene for a delightful performance that captivated an audience of parents, students and staff. The production was a wonderful showcase of teamwork and talent. Grade 1 and 2 students lit up the stage with their energetic dance performances, while the Grade 3 and 4 choir filled the evening with rousing melodies. Our talented Grade 5 students brought J. M. Barrie's beloved story of Peter Pan to life, transporting the audience to Neverland - a world of pirates, fairies and the "Lost Boys". With the amphitheatre filled to capacity, the audience watched in awe as the young performers created a truly enchanting atmosphere. We are incredibly proud of our students and staff who helped bring this magical story to life.





A MEMORABLE SUMMER PRODUCTION

Last Saturday, the Academy witnessed a stunning performance of the Residential Summer Production, *The Hamlet That Goes Wrong*, an in-house adaptation of William Shakespeare's tragic play "Hamlet". This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Theatre Circle's Summer Production, a tradition that began in 2016 under the guidance of Dr Indla Chandrasekhar, theatre arts teacher and Head of the Experiential Learning Programme. Presented by the Aga Khan Academy Theatre Circle, the production brought together 75 residential students from Grades 6 to DP1, who took on diverse roles as actors, designers and backstage crew. The performance also featured song and dance routines inspired by Syrian, African and Indian cultures. For many students, it was their first experience in theatre, offering them an opportunity to build confidence and theatrical skills. The Exchange Students from Mombasa and Maputo academies contributed to the production in major roles both on and off stage. A special highlight of the evening was the presence of an alumnus who began his acting journey with the Theatre Circle's first production in 2016 and now stars as a lead actor in the film *Euphoria*. Sharing his experiences with the community, he illustrated how the Academy's theatre culture can inspire students and

shape future creative paths. The production stands as a testament to the vibrant theatre tradition at the Academy, continuing to nurture self-expression through the performing arts.



A CELEBRATION OF CREATIVITY AND EXPRESSION

The DP2 Art Exhibition marks a significant milestone in the IB Visual Arts programme, representing the culmination of a two-year journey of artistic exploration and growth. Yesterday, the exhibition was inaugurated by our chief guest Dr Priti Samyukta Associate Prof, Head of the Department of Painting and Fulbright-Nehru postdoctoral research fellow at the College of Fine Arts, Jawaharlal Nehru Architecture and Fine Arts University. The gallery opened up for display after the ceremonial lighting of the lamp, showcasing student work that reflected thoughtful inquiry and powerful visual storytelling. This year's exhibition offered an immersive experience through both 2D and 3D forms. Students, guided by their art teachers Mr Visweswara, Ms Meenakshi and Mr Ramakrishna, explored themes ranging from existentialism and female identity to human relationships and the elemental forces of fire and water. Through a diverse range of mediums, including installations, clay sculptures, plaster work and acrylic paintings, each artwork invited the audience to engage with unique perspectives and narratives. The exhibition beautifully showcased the students' ability to think critically, challenge perspectives and communicate ideas through art, making it a truly inspiring celebration of creativity within the Academy community.



A CELEBRATION OF LEADERSHIP, ACHIEVEMENT AND NEW BEGINNINGS

This Wednesday, the Senior School hosted a special assembly to celebrate leadership, achievement and important milestones. The assembly began with a welcome address by the Senior School Principal, followed by a special ceremony in which the 2025 Student Representative Council formally handed over their responsibilities to the newly elected

council members. We also recognised students who participated in the Science Olympiad and those who successfully completed various Internship Programmes. Internship programmes at the Academy provide students with valuable opportunities to develop life and interpersonal skills beyond the classroom, preparing them as ethical and confident future leaders. The assembly concluded with a soulful piano performance by our music teacher Mr Altamash and a ceremonial clap-out for the outgoing DP2 class, marking a proud and emotional moment for the Academy community.



EXPLORING SCIENCE THROUGH COLLABORATION AND FIELDWORK

This week, DP1 science students took part in a two-day Collaborative Science Project that encouraged them to apply scientific thinking through hands-on learning. On the first day, students visited a local farm where they observed sustainable practices and recycling methods. They also explored the surroundings, identifying plants, observing animals and collecting samples for further investigation. On the second day, students worked in groups in the science laboratory to conduct experiments using the samples they had gathered. The project provided an engaging opportunity for students to test their ideas, analyse results and experience science through real-world exploration.



EXPLORING BORDERS AND MIGRATION THROUGH AN INTERDISCIPLINARY LENS

In the interdisciplinary unit “Borders and Migration”, students in Individuals and Societies and English explored the causes and effects of borders - not only physical boundaries but also the social and cultural divisions that shape people’s identities and experiences. They examined how ideas about migration and the movement of people can be communicated through both visual and written forms, analysing how media such as cartoons, advertisements and music can convey powerful messages about migration and itinerant communities. The unit included seminars, discussions and guest speakers who shared first-hand accounts of shifting borders in India’s history, including the Partition of India and Pakistan and the bifurcation of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. These experiences helped students apply concepts and perspectives from both disciplines in meaningful ways. The unit culminated in an interdisciplinary project in which students created comics inspired by these historical case studies. Through storytelling and visual expression, they reflected on the complexities of borders and migration. These creative works will be displayed after the break. Reflecting on the unit, one student shared: *“The part I enjoyed most was creating the comic at the end of the unit because it helped me improve my storytelling and better understand the topic of borders and migration.”*



DP 2 CAS FINAL INTERVIEWS – A PROUD MILESTONE

The DP2 CAS (Creativity, Activity, Service) Final Interviews were successfully conducted by the DP advisors with their respective advisees under the guidance of CAS Coordinator Mr Venkat Reddy. During the interviews, students reflected on their CAS journeys, sharing their experiences, challenges and personal growth through creativity, activity and community service. Students also spoke about their diverse service experiences and the impact these activities had on their understanding of community needs and social responsibility. It was encouraging to see students confidently present the outcomes of their projects and community engagement. The interviews marked an important milestone in their IB Diploma Programme journey and a proud moment for both students and advisors.



PROMOTING STUDENT WELL-BEING THROUGH HEALTH CHECK CAMP

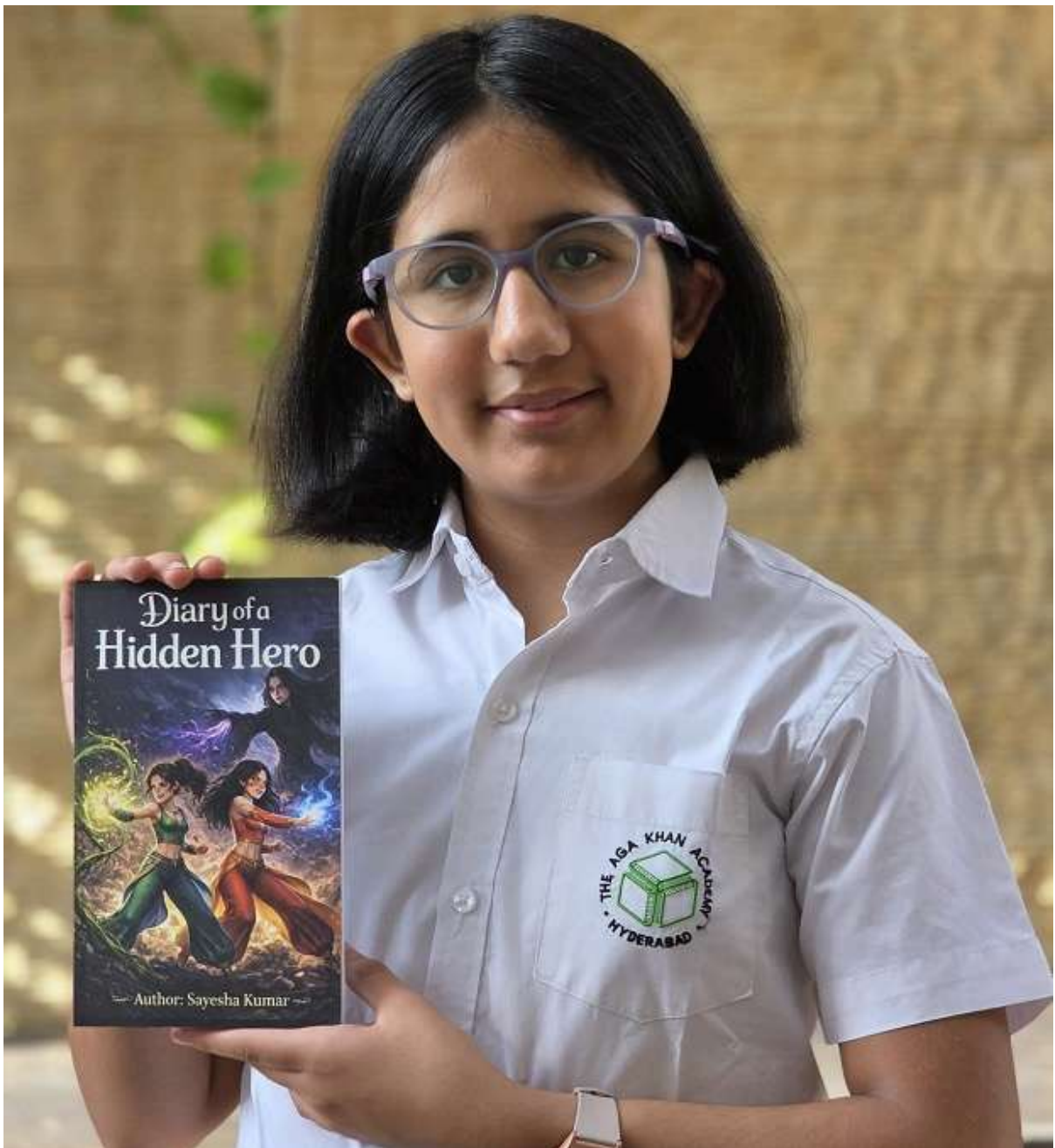
Today, the Academy organised a health check camp for residential students at the Wellness Centre in collaboration with Continental Hospitals. A team of medical professionals, including a paediatrician, ophthalmologists, dentists, nurses and support staff, conducted comprehensive health screenings throughout the day. The initiative reflects the Academy's strong commitment to caring for the physical and mental well-being of our students. Such efforts reinforce the belief that good health is essential for holistic growth and overall student development.



CELEBRATING THE SPIRIT OF UGADI

This Thursday, the Senior School celebrated the joyful spirit of *Ugadi*, the Telugu New Year, marking the beginning of a new cycle filled with hope, prosperity and new beginnings. The campus came alive with vibrant colours as students arrived in beautiful traditional attire, adding to the festive atmosphere. A special lunch was arranged for the community, making the celebration even more memorable. The day was filled with warmth and enthusiasm, as students and staff came together to embrace the cultural significance of this auspicious festival.

THIS WEEK'S STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



A YOUNG AUTHOR'S DEBUT

The Academy congratulates Grade 6 student Sayesha on publishing her first book, *The Diary of Hidden Hero*, now available on Amazon. A promising young author, Sayesha has taken an inspiring step into the world of storytelling. The book follows Zara Ember, a student drawn into a hidden world of magic beneath her school, where she and her friend Maria discover their powers and face a dangerous mission. We celebrate Sayesha's creativity and wish her continued success in her writing journey. You can read the inspiring journey of Zara and Maria [here](#).



SUPPORTING THE PYP TO MYP TRANSITION

On Thursday, the Academy hosted an informative session for Grade 5 parents to support the transition from the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) to the Middle Years Programme (MYP) in the upcoming academic year. The session introduced parents to key aspects of the MYP framework, learning approaches and assessment practices. It also provided an opportunity to address questions and share insights, helping families better understand how the programme nurtures inquiry, critical thinking and holistic development in students.



STRENGTHENING ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN AGA KHAN SCHOOLS

The Academy's Centre for Educational Research, Innovation and Training (CERT) recently marked an important milestone in the English Language Proficiency Training Programme with the successful completion of all three modules in one of the Aga Khan Schools in Chitrad, Gujarat. The final module concluded on 27 February 2026, bringing together teachers who have participated in the programme since its launch in August 2025. Ms Hilda D'Souza, Manager of English for AKESI, was also present during the final module to support alignment between the programme modules and the training needs of the schools. Participants reflected on their journey throughout the programme and shared how it has enabled them to develop a deeper understanding of the various English language skills. Many noted that the training has strengthened their confidence in using the language and has inspired them to make their classrooms more interactive, engaging and student-centred. With the successful completion of the programme in Chitrad, Module 3 will be conducted next month for teachers in Mundra, marking the next step in this ongoing professional development initiative across Aga Khan Schools in Gujarat.



LOOKING AT OURSELVES WITH FRESH EYES

Schools spend much of their time looking outward towards examinations, university destinations and the many activities that fill a busy school year. Occasionally, however, it is important to pause and look inward.

Last week, the Chairs and Co-Chairs of the committees guiding our accreditation journey with the US Middle States Association gathered for a training session that marked the beginning of an important phase of this process. Over the coming months, these teams will lead a Self-Study exercise at the Academy - a careful and thoughtful reflection on who we are as a school and how well we are fulfilling our mission. A key part of this is listening carefully to the voices of those who experience the school every day. Parent and student surveys have now been shared with the community, and we are grateful to everyone who takes a few minutes to respond. Your perspectives will help us see the Academy more clearly - not only through our own eyes, but through the experiences of those we serve. Accreditation is about continuous improvement. In many ways, the process mirrors the kind of learning we hope to foster in our students: the willingness to pause, ask good questions and move forward. In the months ahead, we look forward to sharing more about what we learn together along the way.

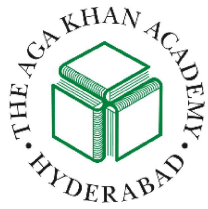
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His Late Highness Aga Khan IV

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

27 March 2026



Dear Parents,

One question I am sometimes asked is: *How do we approach student discipline at the Academy?* This is an important question because it goes to the heart of what it means to educate young people. Our starting point is quite simple - we don't see discipline only as a system of rules designed to control behaviour. Rather, we see it as part of an educational approach that helps young people learn to take responsibility for their actions.

Just like in any school, every day at the Academy brings its share of behavioural challenges. Many of these are much like the "sibling squabbles" you'll be familiar with as parents - an argument, a lapse of judgment or a falling out among friends. Teachers address these low-level issues as part of their everyday work, helping students recognise the consequences of their actions and helping them repair relationships. This quiet work lies at the heart of good education and goes on all over the campus every day.

Sometimes working with young people means dealing with more complicated patterns of conflict or more complex difficulties in relationships with peers. These situations can call for more intentional pastoral support, often including the involvement of counsellors. Responding to these situations might involve nothing more than a quiet conversation, sometimes a restriction, sometimes restitution - and in more serious cases, stronger consequences. But always, the intention is educational rather than only punitive.

Occasionally, a student may be at real risk of harm or a more serious disciplinary incident takes place. At times like this, we have to make sure that concerns are identified quickly and that appropriate measures are put in place right away. In these situations, we are guided by our safeguarding policies. Sometimes this will involve working closely with parents and external professionals, but always with the best interests of the child as the focus. Our staff all receive regular training in safeguarding and child protection, and students are taught how to recognise and report concerns.

We are also clear that mistakes are part of growing up. I find it helpful to remember that adolescents are still developing the capacity for impulse control and emotional regulation. Neuroscience tells us that the prefrontal cortex - the part of the brain responsible for judgment and decision-making - is still maturing well into early adulthood. This is why our approach focuses on helping students understand the impact of their actions and build the skills they are still in the process of developing.

From time to time, I hear the term "bullying" being used to describe certain types of behaviour. We take bullying seriously and address it promptly. But it's important to distinguish between *conflict* and *bullying*. Bullying involves intentional, repeated harm where there is a clear imbalance of power, whereas many day-to-day incidents are conflicts between peers of relatively equal standing. Day-to-day conflicts can cause distress and require intervention, but treating every incident as bullying can obscure the seriousness of genuine cases and limit opportunities for students to learn how to resolve differences constructively.

In all of this, our approach is based on our belief that a safe and supportive community cannot be created by rules alone. It is created by relationships. It grows when students feel known by the adults around them, when they can speak up without fear, and when they understand their responsibility for one another. In this sense, discipline and safety are deeply connected. Both are about helping young people learn how to balance freedom with responsibility, and individuality with respect for others.

As parents, you will recognise this balance from your own homes. Our role at the Academy is an extension of that: to provide a structured, caring environment in which your children can learn, reflect and grow. If we get this right, what emerges is something far more valuable than compliance: young people who choose to do the right thing, even when no one is watching.

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 CONFIDENT START TO THE SECOND HALF OF TERM

Our Junior School students returned from their mid-term break refreshed, energised and ready to embrace new learning experiences. After their remarkable on-stage success in the annual musical, it is wonderful to see the confidence they gained shining through in their classrooms and beyond – whether in participation, creativity or collaboration. As we step into the final weeks of the school year, there is a palpable sense of enthusiasm and purpose across the school. We look forward to a term filled with engaging lessons, exciting opportunities and meaningful achievements. We hope the months ahead will be a memorable and rewarding journey for everyone – students and staff alike.



VOICES ON A GLOBAL STAGE

Two of our DP1 students, Anirudh Duddilla and Nihal Reddy, represented the Academy at the prestigious Oxford Schools' Debating Competition. This is the world's largest British Parliamentary school-level debating event held in the UK. From over 220 Indian teams in the qualifiers hosted by the Indian Debating League, they were among just three teams selected to represent India on this global platform. Competing against 126 teams from 23 countries, they achieved the distinction of Novice Silver Finalists. Reflecting on their experience, the students shared, *"At the Oxford Union, where voices like Churchill, Einstein and the Dalai Lama once echoed, we never imagined we would stand there, speaking and representing our country from over 8,000 kilometres away. The prestige and intensity made every round daunting. Despite early setbacks, we persevered through fierce competition with teams from across the world. The experience humbled us while strengthening our confidence, inspiring us to represent the Academy in many more such platforms."* The Academy is immensely proud of their achievement and hopes their journey inspires many more students to aim high and embrace global opportunities.



THINKING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

DP1 students hosted their Theory of Knowledge (ToK) Exhibition today, showcasing their learning through engaging and thought-provoking displays. The IB ToK programme adds immense value by nurturing curiosity, critical thinking and inquiry through carefully chosen questions and prompts. The 'objects' are a careful selection from their experiential learning, the DP course and general reading. Students presented their perspectives using a range of audio-visual objects, reflecting personal insights and real-world connections. The exhibition highlighted how the Academy encourages diverse viewpoints through individual passion and intellectual acuteness, supporting the holistic development of learners as reflective, informed and globally aware individuals.



EDUCATIONAL IMMERSION IN HISTORY AND CULTURE

A group of 21 participants, including six faculty members and Grade 9 Exchange Programme students, six from Maputo and nine from Mombasa, embarked on a three-night, four-day educational journey through Delhi and Agra, blending history, culture and experiential learning. In Delhi, the group explored Humayun's Tomb and Sunder Nursery, along with the museum, gaining deep insights into Mughal architecture and conservation. A special highlight was an engaging session with Ratish Nanda from the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, who shared valuable perspectives on restoration and preservation. Visits to Jama Masjid and a guided walk through Chandni Chowk brought the vibrancy of Old Delhi to life, while the National Crafts Museum offered a glimpse into India's rich artisanal heritage. In Agra, students visited I'timād-ud-Daulah and the iconic Taj Mahal, where the grandeur and craftsmanship of Mughal architecture left a lasting impression. Beyond the historical exploration, the trip served as a meaningful cultural exchange with students sharing stories, perspectives and experiences, building connections across countries, and deepening their appreciation for diverse traditions and ways of life.



ON TOP OF THE WORLD!

During the March break, six students set off on an unforgettable journey to the Indian Himalayas, accompanied by their teachers, Mr Ramesh and Ms Katy. Taking on the Deoriatal–Chandrashila trek in Uttarakhand's Rudraprayag district, they hiked over four days, navigating altitudes ranging from 6,000 to 12,000 feet. Each day brought new challenges – steep, rugged trails and unexpected weather, including overnight snowfall at their first camp, adding both excitement and a sharp chill for those more accustomed to Hyderabad's warmth. There were moments of struggle, but the students showed remarkable resilience, digging deep mentally and supporting one another every step of the way. Their teamwork and determination carried them forward, and their perseverance was rewarded on the final morning. Setting out at 3 a.m., they reached the summit of Chandrashilla just in time to witness a breathtaking sunrise over the high Himalayas. This journey was more than a trek – it was a powerful learning experience. The students returned with a deeper understanding of their own strength and the value of perseverance. They discovered that with courage, resilience and belief in themselves, even the most daunting challenges can be overcome. Congratulations to the team on the incredible achievement! Standing at the top of the world has etched an indelible memory in their hearts that they will carry forever!



HANDS-ON SCIENCE

This week, Grade 5 students visited the science labs in the Senior School to deepen their understanding of flowers through hands-on learning. Observing and dissecting real specimens, they explored the different parts of a flower and discovered their roles in a plant's life cycle. This practical experience sparked curiosity and moments of discovery, helping students gain a clearer understanding of the changes plants and flowers undergo throughout their lifetime.



SERVICE IN ACTION: LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Service Club, part of our enrichment programme, is a student-led initiative that brings our vision of service to life. Students have engaged in meaningful activities both within and beyond the Academy. At the Academy, the students initiated and helped in setting up locker labels, preparing classroom materials, beautifying spaces and maintaining cleanliness. The students also extended their support to the students of a less privileged government school by improving their food distribution systems and contributing resources like books and utensils. Through these experiences, students have developed responsibility and a deeper awareness of their impact. As Grade 10 student Tanvi reflected, the club encouraged innovative thinking while reinforcing the importance of sustainability and valuing everyday privileges. Another Grade 10 student, Prisha, shared that contributing to both school and community helped her understand how small actions can create a positive environment, while visits to the government school fostered empathy and gratitude. Grade 7 students echoed similar sentiments. Dhivi reflected on becoming more aware of her own privilege and her responsibility towards society and the environment, while Nandika highlighted the joy of working collaboratively on meaningful projects, appreciating the opportunity to be creative while engaging with peers across grades. These experiences have strengthened teamwork and leadership and inspired students to continue making a difference!



CREATING CHANGE THROUGH COMPASSION

The Academy is dedicated to nurturing empathetic and ethical leaders who contribute meaningfully to the community. Our DP1 students have exemplified this through their Rainbow Homes project, where student leaders supported the renovation of a hand wash sink area by facilitating the provision of tiles. This thoughtful contribution has significantly improved the comfort and well-being of the children at the NGO. The Academy is proud of these student leaders whose dedication, teamwork and sense of responsibility continue to inspire meaningful and lasting community impact.



THE CAPSTONE PROJECT: EXCHANGE PROGRAMME 2026

The Exchange Programme 2026 brought together students from the Maputo and Mombasa Academies on a journey of cultural exploration at the Aga Khan Academy Hyderabad. This week, the Capstone Project marked the culmination of their 11-week journey at the Hyderabad campus, showcasing their learning experiences and cross-cultural exchanges through presentations, speeches and performances. During their time in India, they have immersed themselves in diverse cultural practices, gaining insights into the country's history, languages, festivals and everyday life. From exploring local traditions to learning about different regions across India, the experience became a powerful platform for global understanding. Beyond academics, the programme fostered friendships, broadened perspectives and encouraged mutual respect among students from different socio-cultural backgrounds. It was not just a learning opportunity but a transformative journey that celebrated diversity and unity.



LEARNING, LEADING AND CONNECTING GLOBALLY

This week, seven members of our staff are attending the IB Global Conference in Mumbai, one of the most significant gatherings of international educators in our region.

Representing the Academy are our Junior and Senior School Principals, Mr Christian and Ms Archana; our PYP, MYP and DP Coordinators, Ms Lavanya, Ms Meenakshi and Ms Usha; and our Head of Middle School, Ms Afeera. They are joined by Mr Farhad Merchant, CEO of Aga Khan Schools in India. Conferences such as this offer valuable opportunities to engage with global perspectives on teaching, learning and student wellbeing, and to reflect on the evolving role of schools in a changing world. The insights our colleagues bring back will help to inform and enrich our ongoing work here at the Academy. The conference itself brings together leading voices in education, with keynote speakers and workshops exploring themes such as wellbeing, inclusion, and the future of learning. It provides a valuable space for educators to step back, reflect, and engage in meaningful dialogue with colleagues from across the world.



TEACHER TRAINING AT UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD

The Academy's Centre for Educational Research, Innovation and Training (CERT) was invited by the University of Hyderabad Campus School to facilitate sessions for 45 CBSE teachers. These sessions form a key part of their school's 50-hour in-service teacher training mandate. The first session, facilitated by Ms Tharuni Arkathala challenged teachers to rethink technology's role in their classrooms. The focus was on utilising relevant frameworks to ensure technology enhances the cognitive experience. Teachers explored how to mindfully select tools that support student thinking. The second session, facilitated by Ms Amanda Khongwir shifted focus to the powerful synergy between motivation and teamwork. By examining how collaborative structures can transform classroom dynamics, the sessions highlighted practical ways to boost active participation and a shared sense of purpose among both teachers and students. The Academy believes in and supports this collaborative exchange of ideas and the profound impact of collective professional development.

THIS WEEK'S SPOTLIGHTS



A SWING OF SUCCESS

Individual student achievements beyond the campus reflect the Academy's mission of nurturing confident, skilled leaders. The Academy proudly celebrates student achievements that have become an inspiration for us all. Grade 7 student Vivaan Pinnapureddy has time and again displayed his strength and merit in golfing. Recently, he secured first place in the Junior Tournament at the prestigious Boulder Hills Golf Course, Hyderabad, emerging as the winner in his category. The Academy congratulates Vivaan on this outstanding achievement and thanks his parents and teachers for their constant encouragement and support. We wish him continued success.



GALLOPING TO GLORY

The Academy is delighted to share another student achievement as Grade 8 student Shushrutha showcased an outstanding performance in horse-riding competitions during the March term break. Competing across Dressage and Show Jumping categories, Shushrutha secured an impressive total of eight accolades, including three Gold, one Silver and one Bronze medals, along with commendable top four finishes in other events. Her achievements reflect remarkable dedication, discipline and skill. The Academy is incredibly proud of her accomplishments and wishes her continued success in the future.



CELEBRATING LITERARY EXCELLENCE

Mr Chandrasekhar Indla, our Telugu and Drama teacher and Head of Experiential Learning, was invited to participate in the 25-year celebration of Writers Meet, held on March 14 and 15 at Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University. For over two decades, Writers Meet has nurtured aspiring young writers across the Telugu-speaking states. Invited for the eighth time, Mr Indla contributed as a senior writer, sharing his literary journey with emerging voices. This milestone event brought together distinguished authors, and his recognition as a speaker representing contemporary Telugu literature is a moment of great pride for 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
