

from the desk of the
Head of Academy

17 October 2025



Dear Parents,

Joyful Diwali greetings from all of us here at the Academy. May the light of love, family and happiness shine brilliantly in your lives this festive season!

How do children develop their view of the world? What determines whether they see life as a glass half full or a glass half empty?

This week, I came across a fascinating study that tracked children for more than a decade. Led by Dr Jennifer Lansford from Duke University and published in *Child Development* earlier this year, it set out to answer a simple question: what most influences whether a child grows up seeing life as safe or threatening, manageable or overwhelming? As Dr Lansford put it, “We wanted to know what kind of early experiences predict whether someone will believe the world is a good or bad place.”

I used to assume the answer was obvious. Surely, a child’s worldview would be shaped most strongly by major events — war, family breakdown, economic hardship. And of course, these things matter. But surprisingly, they were not the strongest predictors. Dr Lansford’s research suggests that it is not the dramatic events that leave the deepest imprint.

The real driver is far less dramatic and, to me, far more surprising. According to Dr Lansford’s research, the most powerful influence is the everyday warmth of parents and caregivers. A warm environment is one in which a child consistently experiences kindness, safety and encouragement. It showed a stronger and more reliable link to positive worldviews than even socioeconomic status or household stability. In simple terms: children who grow up surrounded by warmth are more likely to believe the world is safe and manageable. The data suggests that even small moments of kindness, repeated over time, add up in ways far more powerful than we realise.

When we say a child is growing up in a warm environment, we mean they feel noticed and supported. It’s about small gestures of kindness. A smile when they walk into the room. A calm response when they make a mistake. A sense that they are valued even when they’re not at their best. These seemingly insignificant acts affirm a child’s sense of confidence and worth. They also do more than lift a child’s mood; they help to form a worldview. When children grow up in this kind of atmosphere, they learn something powerful: I matter, and the world is a good place to be.

These insights are as important for schools as they are for families. We know that a young person’s outlook is shaped not only by what they are taught, but by how they are made to feel. Education is both atmosphere and instruction. Over time, the daily climate of a school becomes part of the emotional landscape in which a child grows up. When that atmosphere is marked by warmth, it teaches children that the world is a place they can trust. Warmth in a school is not about being endlessly cheerful. It is more subtle than that.

It shows up in how adults handle irritation. Whether a mistake is met with dignity or humiliation. Whether humour is used to include or to single someone out. Whether students sense that their teachers are genuinely interested in their growth.

It was encouraging to see this recognised in the report from the *Middle States Association* following our recent pre-accreditation visit. The report notes, “*The culture of humility, respect and inclusivity shows that the school's preferred future is not only aspirational but already visible in practice.*” That quality is no accident. It is the result of countless quiet choices made by adults - about how to speak, how to respond and how to set the tone for those in their care.

And perhaps this is the real lesson of Dr Lansford's research: A child's view of the world emerges from how the world treats them. The atmosphere we create, at home and at school, is not background. It is the message. And in the end, it may shape a child's worldview more powerfully than any curriculum ever could.

Best wishes,

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

Dr Jonathan Long

THIS WEEK'S NEWS



DIWALI CELEBRATIONS IN THE JUNIOR SCHOOL

Music, laughter and energy filled the Junior School today as students and staff celebrated Diwali, the vibrant festival of lights. Students painted colourful diyas and crafted beautiful floral arrangements. Diwali is one of the most widely celebrated festivals in India and holds great cultural and religious importance. Commemorating Lord Rama's return to Ayodhya after defeating the demon king Ravana, Diwali signifies the triumph of light over darkness and good over evil. Beyond its religious roots, Diwali has become a multicultural celebration, embraced by people of various faiths across the world. The festival fosters a sense of unity, compassion and the joy of sharing happiness with others.





CHAMPIONS IN THE POOL

Our swimming team made us proud this week with an outstanding performance at the *Basheeruddin Babukhan Sports Fest 2025-26 – Interschool Swimming Competition*. With 34 students participating, the team won 78 medals — 25 gold, 30 silver and 23 bronze. Swimming has emerged as one of the Academy's strongest competitive sports in recent years. Our disciplined and confident team consistently performs at the top level across Hyderabad. Many congratulations to our victorious team and our dedicated swimming coaches!



LEARNING GREAT SKILLS

A fresh round of Skills Workshops has been launched across the Junior School. Our teachers have put together a wide range of hands-on activities designed to build practical, lifelong skills whilst keeping an element of fun alive.

This week, Ms December introduced music skills to Grades 3-5 and organisation skills to Grades 1 and 2. The younger children have been practising their folding techniques, so don't be surprised if sock drawers at home suddenly look a lot tidier!

Mr Nikhil has been passing on his photography expertise, helping students develop an eye for detail as they capture some impressive shots. Cooking and folding remain firm favourites, alongside several other skills that encourage independence and creativity. Do ask them to show off their new skills at home - you might discover a budding chef, organiser or photographer in the making.



STORIES OF MIGRATION

As part of their ongoing unit of inquiry on Human Migration, Grade 5 students took part in a unique Human Library experience this week. This event invited guests who, as human books, shared their personal stories of migration, offering students an authentic glimpse into the reasons why people move and the impact migration has on lives, cultures and communities. The students asked questions, listened with curiosity and reflected on the values of resilience, adaptability and empathy that migration stories often highlight. The Human Library was a celebration of stories that connect us all - reminding our learners that behind every migration map lies a journey filled with courage and hope.



SWIMMING ESSENTIALS

Swimming is a life skill that builds strength, coordination and confidence. This week, our students had the opportunity to look at swimming from a different angle, thanks to a session led by Ms Anisha, our Swimming Teacher.

Instead of simply jumping into the pool, the children first explored what makes swimming safe and enjoyable. They unpacked some essential agreements - from listening carefully to instructors to understanding why certain poolside rules exist. Rather than viewing these as restrictions, the students came to see them as ways of taking good care of themselves and their friends.

This was also a chance to recognise an unsung hero of our swimming programme - Mr Yasin, our lifeguard. As an experienced professional, he quietly watches over every session, ensuring that all children are protected while they learn and grow in the water.

By the end of the session, students left with a deeper appreciation of swimming as a shared responsibility and a lifelong skill.

THIS WEEK'S STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS



BRUISES AND BUTTERFLIES – A JOURNEY FROM SHADOWS TO LIGHT

Grade 9 student, Tamaara, has already made her mark as a young poet and illustrator. Her debut collection, *Undiscovered*, received wide acclaim. She has recently published her latest work, *Bruises and Butterflies*, exploring the journey from pain to healing and from darkness to hope.

The poems capture life's transformation – from the cocoon of struggles, challenges and self-doubt to transforming into a winged creature that has shed the weight of darkness and flown towards the light of hope and strength.

Keen on writing since the age of five, Tamaara has drawn her inspiration from her grandfather, a celebrated author from Kerala. Tamaara channels deep emotion and introspection into her verses. Through vivid imagery and honesty, she reminds readers that transformation often begins in the quietest moments of struggle — where bruises slowly give way to butterflies. The book is available on Amazon India. You can get your copy of the book [here](#).



HEART AND IMAGINATION

Another young Academy author is Arunima Ghosh, who has just published her first collection of poetry, *Mapping My Muse*. Arunima began writing at the age of seven and has continued ever since, finding delight in transforming thoughts into stories and verse.

Her poems draw from the world around her — from everyday school life and the society she observes, to the quiet companionship of her beloved dog. In *Mapping My Muse*, she balances light and shade with sensitivity and honesty, inviting readers into her inner world while gently reflecting their own. Her work is a lovely reminder that poetry is not only about words, but about truth, imagination and emotion meeting on the same page.



PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR EDUCATORS

The Academy's *Centre for Educational Research, Innovation and Training* (CERT) has taken another meaningful step in its outreach mission. Earlier this week, the CERT team, joined by George Varkey, an educational consultant from the Telangana Government Eklavya Model Residential Society (TGEMRS), visited EMRS Balanagar to conduct a pilot needs analysis.

This visit is the first on-site action under our new Educational Partnership Agreement with TGEMRS. The collaboration will focus on three key areas of teacher development: Competency-Based Mathematics, Capacity Building for Librarians and English Language Proficiency. By identifying strengths and needs directly at the school level, the training programmes to follow will be customised, practical and responsive to the realities teachers face.

This new partnership builds on the success of our earlier collaboration with the Telangana Tribal Welfare Residential Educational Institutions Society (TTWREIS), where the Professional Learning Educators Series (PLES) — our Programme for Teachers of English — demonstrated the transformative power of sustained, hands-on mentorship.

At its heart, this work reflects the Academy's belief that improving student outcomes begins with investing in teachers. CERT's approach goes beyond workshops and modules; it builds professional confidence, nurtures reflective practice and creates peer learning

communities that last well beyond the training period.

Together, CERT and TGEMRS are working towards a shared goal — to ensure that every teacher is equipped not only with skills but also with the conviction that they can change lives. In doing so, we lay the foundations for brighter futures for thousands of students across Telangana.



WELCOMING AGA KHAN SCHOOLS NEW GENERAL MANAGER

We are delighted to share that Dr Rahim Somani has been appointed as the new General Manager of the Aga Khan Schools (AKS), and he will be based in Geneva, Switzerland.

This is a very special appointment – Dr Somani was once a student at one of our schools. He also previously worked with the Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan, helping to improve schools and support students.

Even more special, his daughter attended one of our schools, showing that his family

continues to be part of our global school community.

Dr Somani believes deeply in the power of education to create opportunities and improve lives. He has spent many years working in education and public service in different parts of the world, including North America, Central Asia and South Asia, and beyond. Prior to joining AKS, he served as Vice President, Finance and Administration at the University of Northern British Columbia, and was the Founding Chief Financial Officer of the University of Central Asia, within the Aga Khan Development Network.

In the coming months, he will be visiting our schools and meeting students, staff and leaders across AKS.

We hope you will join us in giving him a warm welcome – and we hope his story reminds you that great things can grow from a strong education, hard work and service to others.

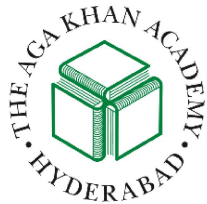
“The students at this institution will be distinguished not only for their academic capacity, but for their character and their commitment to citizenship.”

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

24 October 2025



Dear Parents,

“Dad, can we get a horse?” That was a question I wasn’t expecting. My daughters were nine and seven at the time, right at that age when owning a horse would be a little girl’s dream come true. They could already picture where it would sleep, what they would name it, even who would ride it first. In their minds, all that stood between them and their dream was a simple “yes” from me.

The practicalities were completely lost on them. My wife and I were both working at a residential school in the centre of Oxford at the time. Our garden was tiny. A horse would never have fitted. But their enthusiasm was relentless, and as every parent knows, once an idea takes hold, it is impossible to contain.

In business, it might be called negotiation. In family life, it is known as compromise, although sometimes it feels more like being held to ransom. After much discussion, we agreed that a cat might be a more practical option. And so for the first time, two young children discovered the remarkable power of bargaining. If you really want a cat, start by asking for a horse!

That is how Morph came into our lives, a handsome Russian Blue kitten. Aristocratic, gentle and stubborn, he was the perfect companion for the girls. Like all cats, he didn’t have owners; he had staff. Morph travelled with us to Switzerland and later to Scotland. Before we came to India, he retired to my sister’s home in a small village in southern England and lived to the grand old age of twenty.

Morph taught me something about the art of compromise. Too much of it can encourage manipulation, and there are times when a clear “no” is the best answer. But compromise is not surrender. It is an expression of respect and an opportunity for children to be heard. It helps avoid resentment and builds the habit of constructive conversation.

As parents and teachers, we sometimes confuse firmness with strength and flexibility with weakness. Yet some of the most meaningful learning moments for children and teenagers come not from confrontation but from conversation. When we show a willingness to listen, adjust, and find middle ground, we model empathy and fairness. Those moments of compromise teach young people that relationships matter more than being right, and that working together often achieves more than standing our ground.

Parenting and teaching both require clear rules and boundaries, but they also ask for patience and humility. Compromise is where young people learn that responsibility and freedom belong together. They learn that choices have consequences, but also that adults can be trusted to listen and respond with care. These small negotiations are part of their moral education, shaping judgment and self-awareness.

In family life and in school, compromise can be a bridge rather than a concession. It can

turn conflict into understanding and help a child take one more step towards maturity.

Morph was the result of a compromise, one that began with a conversation. I would never have guessed that he would become one of the defining personalities in two little girls' childhoods. And that is what makes these conversations so special. You never quite know what they will grow into in our children's lives.

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



LIGHTING LIVES – A DIWALI CELEBRATION

This week, Grade 3 students lit up the stage with a special Diwali assembly. Using storytelling, skits and dance, the children explored the deeper meaning of Diwali, not only as a festival of lights, but as a celebration of kindness, unity and giving.

The assembly opened with a presentation on how festivals of light are celebrated around the world. In India, Diwali was highlighted as a festival rich in diversity - celebrated differently across the country and even embraced in non-Hindu households. The students spoke with pride, sharing cultural insights and encouraging their peers to reflect on their own family traditions.

A skit titled “A Brighter Diwali” reminded us that the true spirit of the festival lies in sharing joy with others. Students portrayed how empathy and inclusion can transform lives. The message was clear: Diwali shines brightest when we light up someone else’s world.

The assembly concluded with a dance performance, a skit in Telugu and a Hindi poem. We are proud of our young presenters for their confidence, compassion and creativity!



CELEBRATING THE SPIRIT OF DIWALI AT THE ACADEMY

Our residential community celebrated Diwali with special events on campus last weekend. Celebrations included student performances, followed by a delicious lawn dinner. Colourful decorations adorned the Commons, including a beautiful rangoli at the entrance. Festivals like Diwali allow our residential students to experience the joy of home even while living away from it, and to appreciate the diversity that gives our community its warmth and strength.





OUTSTANDING ATHLETIC ACHIEVEMENTS

The Junior School secured third position at the *PYP Hyderabad Network Athletics Meet 2025-26*, held last week. Competing against 19 schools, our students delivered exceptional performances, earning a total of 23 medals — 7 Gold, 11 Silver and 5 Bronze. The determination, teamwork and perseverance of our students shone through, making us immensely proud of their achievement.



SERVICE CLUB AND GREEN CLUB CLEANLINESS DRIVE

The Service Club and Green Club collaborated to organise a cleanliness drive in the school during the enrichment period this week. This was the second initiative of the year undertaken by the Service Club.

This initiative aims to keep our campus clean and support our housekeeping staff. At the same time, the clubs hope to raise awareness about avoiding littering and using sustainable practices.

The Academy houses several green areas that support a variety of flora and fauna, aligning with the country's Sustainable Development Goal 15: Life on Land. As green spaces continue to diminish in our city, we must take greater care to preserve the natural beauty on our campus and around it.



LEARNING THROUGH PLAY!

Grade 3 students brought their learning in addition and subtraction to life through a creative and engaging project. From brainstorming ideas and designing their own board games to setting rules and crafting layouts, they took full ownership of the process. This hands-on experience fostered a genuine sense of agency, enabling them to apply mathematical concepts in playful, meaningful ways. As they shared their games with peers from other grades, their communication, collaboration and critical thinking skills shone through - whether explaining the rules, strategising their moves, or reflecting on their decisions. It was lovely to see mathematics come alive through imagination and play.



BUILDING STRENGTH AND SPORTSMANSHIP

Our Under-16 students participated in two friendly matches against GMR Chinmaya Vidyalaya last Saturday as part of the weekend sports programme. The boys competed in cricket and the girls in volleyball, with both teams emerging victorious. These weekend fixtures are proving invaluable as our students prepare for upcoming interschool tournaments. Beyond building agility and skill, friendly matches like these strengthen teamwork and a spirit of healthy competition - qualities that lie at the heart of sporting excellence.



LEARNING AND GROWING THROUGH SPORTS

Our students participated in the *Varsity Weekend U-18 Boys Basketball League* held at Gaudium School. They began the tournament on a strong note, winning their first match against Pallavi Model School Alwal, before facing a tough loss in the second match against Birla Open Minds International School. Irrespective of the results, these games play a vital role in building our students' physical agility and mental resilience, while instilling important values of teamwork, perseverance and sportsmanship.

THIS WEEK'S STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



CELEBRATING KINDNESS AND COMMUNITY SPIRIT

At the Academy, we believe that acts of kindness play a vital role in shaping individual character and also the well-being of our wider community. Kindness reflects the values we hold dear - compassion, empathy, and a sense of responsibility toward others.

This spirit was beautifully embodied by Sam, a Grade 7 student who, for his 12th birthday, chose to forgo personal gifts and instead invite cash donations for a cause close to his heart. His goal was to provide soccer equipment for the boys at *Amma Odi Volunteer Children's Home*, an orphanage he had come to know and care for. Inspired by his initiative, the local community rallied behind him, contributing generously with food items, toys, books, clothing, and an additional ₹10,000 in support of the children's education.

Last Saturday, Sam and his family delivered the donations to Amma Odi. The day was filled with joy and gratitude as the boys received their gifts and played football with Sam, who helped set up a goal post for a lively penalty shootout. Sam's thoughtful act of generosity and leadership is an example of how one individual's compassion can inspire a

community - and how we continue to nurture young people who embody empathy, purpose, and social responsibility.



#leadersfortomorrow
#రేపటినాయకులు

Help us create a brighter future
ప్రకాశవంతమైన మన భవిష్యత్తు కోసం ఈ పండుగలు దోహద పడతాయి.

DONATE <https://giving.agakhanacademies.org>

#LeadersForTomorrow: Graduating Class Gift Campaign 2026

As the Class of 2026 prepares to graduate, we're excited to launch this year's Graduating Class Gift Campaign — a chance to give back and help shape a brighter future. Through the **#LeadersForTomorrow** initiative, the Class of 2026 is raising funds for the Student Scholarship Fund, which supports talented students from underserved communities across India. Every contribution—big or small—makes a real difference. Your support can help open doors and change lives.

Make your donation today at: <https://payment.agakhanacademies.org/donation/in> (Or click "Donate" on the Aga Khan Academies homepage.) All donations are tax-exempt under Section 80G. Thank you for being part of this journey.

#LeadersForTomorrow | #ClassGift2026 | #TransformingLivesThroughEducation

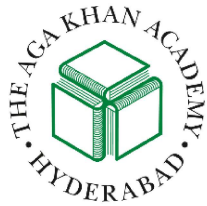
“The students at this institution will be distinguished not only for their academic capacity, but for their character and their commitment to citizenship.”

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

31 October 2025



Dear Parents,

In the late 1990s, two psychologists at Harvard University, Christopher Chabris and Daniel Simons, designed one of the most iconic experiments in modern psychology. It didn't involve complex equipment or lengthy surveys. Instead, it used a simple, almost playful task: ask people to watch a video of two teams passing a basketball between them and count the number of passes made by one of the teams.

The participants watched carefully as the ball moved between the players. Then, halfway through the video, something odd happened. A person in a gorilla costume walked into the scene, paused briefly, and then walked calmly away. [The gorilla and the basketball](#)

Afterwards, the researchers asked the viewers if they had seen anything unusual. Roughly half the viewers missed the gorilla entirely! Their eyes were open, but their attention was elsewhere. They were focused only on the movement of the ball and not on anything else.

This phenomenon is called *inattention blindness*. When our attention becomes narrowly

channelled, we fail to notice things right in front of us. The experiment became famous because it revealed something important about the human mind: we do not see everything we look at. We see what we expect to see. We see what we are looking for.

Having blind spots is not a failing; it is part of being human. Yet the study carries a valuable lesson for all of us who live and work with young people. Attention is selective. Even thoughtful, caring adults can miss crucial aspects of a child's world.

For instance, if we expect a child to be "distracted," "high-achieving" or "difficult," we may unintentionally only notice the behaviour that fits the label. Meanwhile, subtle emotional signals can pass by unnoticed: a worry, self-doubt, or feelings of loneliness. Holding our judgements lightly and asking, *What else might be happening here?* is a good place to begin.

Schools are full of visible activity: lessons, assessments, meetings, assemblies, friendships and celebrations. We rightly pay attention to the obvious things: academic progress, missed assignments, a messy room or a looming deadline. It is easy to be consumed by what is urgent and evident.

But while we are busy "counting passes," something important may be happening just out of sight. The student who suddenly sits alone at lunch. The cheerful child who seems a little subdued. The teenager who grows irritable not out of defiance, but out of anxiety or fear. A dip in confidence that hints at something deeper.

To notice moments like these requires more than looking. It requires a particular quality of attention. It asks for presence that is unhurried, and that is not always easy in the rush of school and family life.

This does not mean responding to every emotion with alarm. Children have ups and downs. Our role is not to magnify every wobble, but to approach with curiosity rather than certainty. Instead of leaping to conclusions, we pause. We ask questions. We stay open to understanding what lies beneath the surface. We try hard to spot the gorillas!

We will not always see everything unfolding in a child's world. Some influences are subtle and complex. For instance, shifting friendships or the pull of social media. But some of the most important parts of growing up are easy to miss. Perhaps we can begin simply with slowing down enough each day to offer a gentle word without hurry. Share a short walk or a brief conversation. A minute or two of genuine attention can make a world of difference to a young person finding their way. Sometimes we need to step back from what demands our attention to notice what truly deserves it.

Best wishes,

Jonathan Long

Dr Jonathan Long



AFTERNOON BUS DEPARTURE TIMES

To support a smooth and timely dismissal for all students, please note that, with effect from Monday, 10 November, all school buses will depart the Academy at 3:40 p.m. sharp.

While most students arrive promptly, we have observed that delays to multiple buses are often caused by the late arrival of just one or two students. This new measure is being introduced to ensure all buses can leave on time and to minimise inconvenience to other families.

From Monday, 10 November onward, any student who has not boarded their bus by 3:40 p.m. will need to report to the Reception Desk in the Academy building (Senior School students) or the Junior School Office (Junior School students), where alternative travel arrangements will be made in consultation with their parents.

We appreciate your cooperation and support in helping our students arrive at the buses on time so that we can ensure an efficient end to the school day for everyone.

THIS WEEK'S NEWS



EXPLORING LIFE SKILLS

Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) is an important part of the Academy's curriculum. It nurtures the social, emotional and ethical foundations that help young people lead balanced, healthy and purposeful lives. Alongside academic learning, we believe it is essential to equip students with the skills and dispositions they need to understand themselves and navigate an increasingly complex world with confidence and compassion.

This week, a PSHE workshop was conducted for Grades 6 to 10 on the theme "Managing Emotions." These sessions provided our students with space to pause, reflect and develop practical strategies for understanding and responding to their feelings.

Students took part in a range of interactive and reflective activities, including role plays, discussions, games and debates and creating personalised handbooks. Through these activities, they explored how emotions evolve with age, the role they play in shaping identity, their influence on relationships and constructive ways to cope during challenging

moments.

The sessions offered valuable opportunities for students to connect with one another and build self-management skills. They also served as a gentle reminder to appreciate positive moments and to remember that, when difficulties arise, they are never alone - their peers and teachers are here to support them.



TELUGU LESSONS THROUGH CREATIVITY

Students studying Telugu as a second language in the Junior School have been engaging in rich learning experiences using a range of concepts. Appreciating and learning languages is an important part of our vision, as it nurtures cultural understanding, strengthens identity, and deepens our connection to the communities we serve.

As part of their inquiry into migration, students reflected on why people move, and the challenges and opportunities that accompany new beginnings. They also explored themes of peace and conflict, expressing their understanding through creative booklets that

encouraged empathy, respect and harmony.

In language learning, students strengthened their grasp of tenses by crafting stories in the past, present and future. They enjoyed storytelling sessions that sparked imagination and strengthened expression, and they explored seasonal changes, developing awareness of how weather shapes daily life and the environment.

Across these experiences, students built their communication, creativity and critical-thinking skills while deepening their appreciation of the Telugu language and culture as a vital part of our shared community.



EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH FINANCIAL LITERACY

Last Wednesday, two of our DP 2 students, Sahasra Punnam and Keisha Reddy, conducted a financial literacy workshop for the female support staff at the Academy. As part of their initiative entitled “arth4her”, they are developing an app designed to equip women with essential financial knowledge and practical tools to support informed decision-

making and independence.

During the session, Sahasra and Keisha introduced the purpose and vision behind the app and offered a pre-launch walkthrough. They demonstrated features focused on everyday money management, saving habits and strategies for building long-term financial security.

The workshop created a thoughtful space for dialogue. Our support staff shared their own experiences, asked questions and offered constructive feedback to make the app more relevant and user-friendly. Their insights highlighted not only the importance of financial education but also the power of listening to the lived experiences of those we seek to serve.

Opportunities like this are a vital part of the Aga Khan Academy vision - encouraging students to apply their learning in ways that foster ethical leadership, empathy and service to others. By engaging with and learning from members of our school community, Sahasra and Keisha modelled the values of initiative, inclusion and social responsibility that lie at the heart of our mission.



SHOWCASING CREATIVITY AT CASCADE

Recently, Emon Savani, Simran Lakhani and Karina Ajani, our Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) project leaders, attended the CASCade presentation at the CHIREC International School in Hyderabad.

The CASCade is a collaborative platform where students from seven schools presented more than 14 innovative projects. Our students presented three major projects – CAS

Magazine, CareWell and Organic Farm. They showcased outstanding creativity, teamwork and communication skills through their well-prepared presentations.

The CAS Magazine and Organic Farm projects received the Best Creativity Project Award, recognising their originality, purpose-driven approach and consistent commitment to the ideals of Creativity, Activity and Service. Congratulations to all the student leaders and mentors for their remarkable achievement.



APPROACHES TO LEARNING

Grade 3 students presented an assembly this week on Approaches to Learning (ATL) Skills, highlighting how these essential capacities help them grow as independent, reflective and lifelong learners. Within the IB framework, ATL skills play a central role in developing students who can think critically, communicate clearly, work effectively with others and manage their own learning. They equip young people with knowledge but also with the habits of mind and character needed to apply that knowledge in responsible and meaningful ways.

The assembly began with an introduction to the five ATL skill categories – thinking, research, communication, social and self-management skills. Students confidently explained how each of these supports their learning both inside and beyond the classroom.

Through role plays, poems and skits, students shared real-life examples of how they practise these skills every day – from collaborating with classmates and asking thoughtful

questions, to solving problems creatively and managing their time with care and independence.

The audience appreciated the students' joyful commitment to learning. Their message was clear: true education is not only about what we know, but also about developing the skills to use knowledge wisely, thoughtfully and with purpose.



INTER-HOUSE FOOTBALL SPARKS TEAM SPIRIT

The Senior School Inter-House Football Tournament held on Tuesday brought together students from both Middle and Senior School for an exciting day of competition, teamwork and camaraderie. All four houses - Kakatiya, Nizam, Pandya and Maurya - participated with great enthusiasm, displaying impressive skill and sportsmanship. In the Middle School category, Nizam House secured first place followed by Maurya House, while in the Senior School category, Kakatiya House emerged victorious with Maurya House as runners-up. Congratulations to all participants for their spirited performances and teamwork throughout the tournament.



LESSONS ON FIRST AID

The International Award for Young People (IAYP), part of the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award framework, is a global programme that encourages young people to develop resilience, leadership, service and outdoor skills. Through personal challenge and community engagement, students cultivate confidence, independence and a spirit of adventure.

As part of their preparation for the upcoming camping expedition, our IAYP students participated in a First Aid Training course this week. Led by Dr Sreedevi, the session equipped students with essential skills for staying safe in outdoor settings. They learned how to respond to common situations such as cuts and wounds, sprains and fractures, nosebleeds and heat stroke, as well as how to recognise and manage bites, allergies and potential wildlife encounters. Dr Sreedevi also introduced them to important emergency procedures, including the Recovery Position and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

While we hope these skills will not be needed on the camp, the training has given our students and staff confidence and readiness should any situation arise. We are grateful to

Dr Sreedevi for sharing her expertise and supporting our young people. We look forward to a safe, enriching and memorable camp in the coming weeks.



SHARPENING SKILLS THROUGH WEEKEND FOOTBALL

As part of their weekend sports activity, the Senior School boys' football team played a friendly but challenging match against the Msg Junior College in Chandrayan Gutta, Hyderabad, with both teams scoring two goals each. These weekly matches provide valuable opportunities for players to refine their techniques, apply strategies in real match situations and strengthen their teamwork. Beyond skill development, the games foster discipline, resilience and true sportsmanship - essential values that prepare the team for upcoming inter-school tournaments.



BUILDING BONDS AT THE COMMUNITY CAFÉ

As part of our new residential programme, students now enjoy a regular Saturday afternoon Community Café – a much-loved gathering that brings our boarding community together each week. The café features live food stations, music, refreshments and friendly games, creating a relaxed and joyful atmosphere where students and staff can unwind.

More than just a social event, the Community Café is designed to strengthen relationships, nurture wellbeing and build a warm sense of belonging. It offers students a chance to pause, connect and recharge before the week ahead, fostering camaraderie, friendship and a vibrant community spirit at the heart of residential life.

THIS WEEK'S STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS



CONQUERING THE TRAILS WITH DETERMINATION

Grade 10 student Sama Gupta achieved an outstanding feat in the first edition of the Ananthagiri Hills Trail Run 2025 held on 26 October in Vikarabad, Telangana. She was the only participant under 18 years of age to have competed in the 10 km timed trail, marked by rocky terrain and steep elevations. Sama secured an overall 3rd place in the Women's Category and 2nd place in the Under-40 category. She clocked a finishing time of 1 hour, 14 minutes and 31 seconds, showcasing exceptional endurance and determination. We wish Sama the very best in all her future endeavours.



MAKING WAVES

Iqra Hirani from Grade 6 delivered an impressive performance at the Blue Waves Aquatics Championship 2025, held on 19 October. Demonstrating skill, focus and determination, she earned two silver medals and one bronze medal across her events. Her achievements highlight not only her growing talent in swimming but also her commitment to continuous improvement and sportsmanship in every competition she takes part in. We congratulate Iqra for her exceptional performance.



NEWS FROM THE SENIOR SCHOOL

On Thursday, Senior School students completed an extensive survey that helped the Academy gather feedback from all students about their experiences since the start of the academic year. The survey included questions about the new timetable, the 60-minute lessons, student wellbeing and support, workshops on Personal, Social and Health Education or College Counselling and many other activities in the Senior School. For several questions, students were asked to let us know to what extent they agree with specific statements. These are examples of the responses we received:

The increase in the number and length of Physical Education lessons helps me to get better at sports and improve my fitness. You can see the results [here](#).

The scheduling of parallel PE groups in my Grade Level offers me the opportunity to select the sport(s) I am more interested in. You can see the results [here](#).

The half-day workshops for PSHE / College Counselling / EE or CAS allow me to learn about important topics with more focus and engage in more varied activities that help me learn better. You can see the results [here](#).

My Advisor generally knows how I am doing and is available when I need help or advice. You can see the results [here](#).

The publication of levels or grades two to three days after assessments, with feedback, has been returned to students helps me pay more attention to the feedback my teachers

are giving me. You can see the results [here](#).

The scheduling of lessons based on Weeks A and B is manageable and I have learnt to cope with the small differences between the weeks. You can see the results [here](#).

The 60-minute lessons (compared to 45-minute lessons last year) offer my teachers and me plenty of opportunities to engage in a greater variety of learning activities and to learn more effectively. You can see the results [here](#).

When I need help, feedback or advice, I know which staff members of the Senior School (teachers, Advisors, Grade Level Leaders, Coordinators, Principal, Dorm Parents, Counsellors) I can go to. You can see the results [here](#).

An important AKA Hyderabad learner profile attribute is "steward". I demonstrate that I seek to be a steward for others and our environment by taking good care of school resources, looking for ways to reduce my ecological footprint and being mindful in my daily actions. You can see the results [here](#).

While it is very reassuring to see that students are reflecting positively on the changes that were introduced this year, it is also recognised that the students shared many deeply reflective and insightful comments, such as:

I really enjoyed participating in the sports activities this semester, especially football. It helped me stay active, work with my friends as a team and improve my endurance and coordination.

I have really enjoyed the PSHE session recently conducted on October 27th. I also really liked Intra-MUN. It was a great time for me to socialise and to also understand my strengths in debating.

I really enjoyed the PSHE activities as we got to explore how the internet really works and how it can be harmful for us and about cyberbullying and etc., and I am looking forward to a lot more of these sessions.

Something that was challenging was the unexpected formative assessments we had starting this academic year. These were difficult to cope with and achieve well, as we didn't have prior notice, so we couldn't prepare. This led me to revise my notes for all subjects every day so I could do well.

For me, it is the surprise formatives as they taught me to be more aware and ready. They also helped me keep track of my studies and keep on my toes.

In the beginning, the 1-hour lessons felt very long for all subjects. Now, I think it helped a lot for subjects like Science and PE, because we have more time.

I feel like now starting science makes me want to be a scientist because it's so interesting

and I wish I had learned it before. Something that challenged me was the academics. In my old school, academics were not that hard; however, now at the Academy, I have to work harder and more of a challenge.

In the beginning, the 1-hour lessons felt very long for all subjects. Now, I think it helped a lot for subjects like Science and PE because we have more time.

Other updates:

- a. Semester 1 Parent-Student-Teacher conferences took place today (all day) and will continue on Saturday, November 1 (9 am to 1:45 pm)
- b. MYP 4 and DP 1 semester 1 exams will take place from November 17 to 21, as per the calendar.
- c. Grade Level trips will happen – as calendared – from December 3 to 6 (December 5 for MYP 1 & 2). The trips have been designed to avoid excessively long travels, to keep costs manageable and to provide meaningful and engaging activities that support curricular aspects, outdoor education, team building and leadership skills. Information about the trips will be shared very soon.

“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
