

NEWS RELEASE

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Singapore, 22 March 2006

Prestigious International Physics Olympiad to be held in Singapore for the first time

From 8th to 17th July 2006, Singapore will play host for the first time to the International Physics Olympiad (IPhO). The competition is the most prestigious competition of its kind for pre-university students. The 37th IPhO is jointly organised by Singapore's Nanyang Technological University (NTU), National Institute of Education (NIE), National University of Singapore (NUS) and the Institute of Physics, Singapore (IPS). The event is supported by the Ministry of Education (MOE).

A record 85 countries are expected to take part, including Japan, Brunei, Laos, Bangladesh, Puerto Rico and Cameroon, which will be participating in IPhO for the first time. About 800 visitors are expected here for the 10-day event, these include the student participants, their leaders, and other observers and guests.

The IPhO was started in 1967 in Warsaw to encourage excellence in science education and promote friendship among young people from different nations. The competition consists of both theoretical and practical tests set by top physics professors from the host country in consultation with the international board.

The event is held in a different country each year. Bidding to host the IPhO is highly competitive, and host nations for the next 15 years have already been confirmed, so it may be quite some time before it is Singapore's turn again.

Singapore has been participating in the last 17 years and has consistently performed well, earning a total of 38 medals so far. Many past participants from Singapore have gone on to study at top universities, among them, three are President's Scholars. Members for this year's Singapore team will be selected in May, after rigorous rounds of nation-wide tests.

Dr He Ruimin, a Singapore gold medallist (1999) and now a member of the Singapore IPhO organising committee, remembers the excitement and pride of representing his country. He credits the competition for teaching him to approach problems in an analytical and creative way. He said, *"The IPhO exposed me to competition at the highest level and inspired me to drive myself harder. I thoroughly enjoyed the intellectual discussions and social interactions with fellow participants, some of whom became very good friends in college. After all the IPhO has done for me, I am excited to have the opportunity to help organise it here in Singapore."* Dr He is a President's Scholar and an MIT graduate.

Agreeing, Mr Bernard Ricardo Widjaja, Indonesia's silver medallist at the 2003 IPhO and now a second year student at NTU's School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, said, *"The IPhO serves to unleash a student's potential to the maximum. The questions posed to the participants each year are often related to the latest development in the field. It is really a great chance for students to hone their understanding and their ability in sciences in general."*

On the importance of IPhO, Professor Xu Shuyan, Organising Chairman of the 37th IPhO and Professor of Physics at NTU's NIE, said: *"Physics is the foundation of the many different areas of science and technology. Nurturing a pool of talented youths in physics will be critical in supporting Singapore's push for excellence in education and R&D. We hope, by staging IPhO here in Singapore and through the various events planned in conjunction with it, to reach out and further inspire Singapore's young minds and interest them in Science."*

Professor Xu adds, *"The IPhO is an excellent platform for top pre-university students from all over the world to mingle and network. It is also a great opportunity for them to get to know the host country, Singapore."*

The young participants will get a taste of Singapore university life, as they will be staying at NTU's halls of residence and will be taking their tests at venues

within the campus. Over three hundred Liaison Officers, all student volunteers, will be on hand to welcome them and show them around Singapore.

While the tests will be rigorous and the competition intense, their 10-day stay in Singapore will not be all work and no play. The organising committee, in consultation with the Singapore Tourism Board (STB), has planned exciting tours for the visitors to experience Singapore.

Besides the tours, participants are in for a treat. With the support of NTU's Institute of Advanced Studies (IAS) and A*STAR, four Nobel Laureates, Professor CN Yang (1957), Professor Samuel Ting (1976), Professor Douglas Osheroff (1996) and Professor Aaron Ciechanover (2004) will be here to deliver lectures during the event. This is the highest number of Nobel Laureates ever at one IPhO, and for the first time in IPhO history, all the participants will be invited to dine with these Nobel Laureates.

Another first for IPhO is the Astronomy Night which is planned to take place at NTU. The open-air event will see a gathering of amateur astronomers with about 50 telescopes, one of the biggest gatherings ever of its kind in Singapore. Distinguished scientist Professor Paul Davies (Templeton Prize winner, 1995) will be delivering a talk on that night to participants.

Organisations which would like to be partners of the event can visit the website <http://www.ipho2006.org/> for details.

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About Nanyang Technological University

Nanyang Technological University (NTU) is a research-intensive university with globally acknowledged strengths in science and engineering. The university has a beautiful garden campus and a distinguished lineage with roots that go back to 1955.

NTU's 12 schools span diverse disciplines – from engineering and the sciences to art, design and media. The university has a strong engineering college focused on innovation, a business school with one of the top 100 MBA programmes in the world, an internationally-acclaimed National Institute of Education, one of the best communication and information schools in Asia, and a biological sciences school at the forefront of Singapore's life sciences initiative. The Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies is a world authority on terrorism issues.

Ranked among the top 50 universities in the world, NTU has in place multi-country programmes and initiatives, many established through its strategic alliances with 300 institutions in more than 45 countries, including Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Stanford University, California Institute of Technology, Cornell University, Cambridge University, and Beijing University.

For more information, visit www.ntu.edu.sg

FACT SHEET

Singapore, 22 March 2006

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Prestigious International Physics Olympiad to be held in Singapore for the first time in its 39 years history

Programme Highlights (as at 13 Mar 2006)

Date	Activity	Venue	Remarks
Sat 8 July, Night	Welcome Party: open-air	NIE	
Sun 9 July	Opening Ceremony and March Past	NTU	GOH: President Nathan
	Talk by Nobel Laureate	NTU	
Mon 10 July	Theory paper	NIE/NTU	
	Talk by Nobel Laureate	NTU	
	Excursion / Sightseeing		
Tue 11 July	Excursion / Sightseeing		
Wed 12 July	Experimental Paper	NIE/NTU	
	Dinner with Nobel Laureates	Orchid Country Club	
Thu 13 July	Excursion / Sightseeing		
Fri 14 July	Talk by Nobel Laureates	NUS High School	
	Research Visit	NTU/NUS/BIOPOLIS	
	Astronomy Night and Talk by Templeton Prize Winner	NIE/NTU	
Sat 15 July	Excursion / Sightseeing		
	National Day Preview (To be confirmed)		

Sun 16 July	Closing Ceremony and announcement of results	NTU Auditorium	GOH: Minister of Education
	Farewell Banquet	Neptune Restaurant	
Mon 17 July	Departure		

Information on Nobel Laureates, Templeton Prize Winner

1) Professor Douglas D. Osheroff

Department of Physics, Stanford University, USA

Nobel Prize in Physics (1996) for the discovery of *superfluidity in helium-3*.

Prof Osheroff has received among other awards the Institute of Physics Sir Francis Simon Memorial Prize 1976 and the Oliver E. Buckley Solid State Physics Prize (American Physical Society) 1980 for the discovery of superfluidity in helium-3.

For more information on Prof Osheroff, please visit:
<http://nobelprize.org/physics/laureates/1996/osheroff-autobio.html>

2) Professor Samuel C.C. Ting

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, USA

Nobel Prize in Physics (1976) for pioneering work in the discovery of a heavy elementary particle of a new kind.

Prof Ting has been awarded the Ernest Orlando Lawrence Award from the US government in 1976, the DeGasperis Award in Science from the Italian government in 1988, the Eringen Medal awarded by the Society of Engineering Science in 1977, the Golden Leopard Award for Excellence from the town of Taormina, Italy in 1988 and the Gold Medal for Science and Peace from the city of Brescia, Italy in 1988.

For more information on Prof Ting, please visit
<http://nobelprize.org/physics/laureates/1976/ting-autobio.html>

3) Professor Chen-Ning Yang

Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, New Jersey, USA.

Nobel Prize in Physics (1957) for investigation of the so-called parity laws which has led to important discoveries regarding the elementary particles.

Prof Yang has been elected Fellow of the American Physical Society and the Academia Sinica, and honoured with the Albert Einstein Commemorative Award (1957). The U.S. Junior Chamber of Commerce named him one of the outstanding young men of 1957. He was also awarded an honorary doctorate of the Princeton University, N.J. (1958).

For more information on Prof Yang, please visit
<http://nobelprize.org/physics/laureates/1957/yang-bio.html>

4) Professor Aaron Ciechanover

Technion - Israel Institute of Technology, Haifa, Israel

Nobel Prize in Chemistry (2004) for the discovery of ubiquitin-mediated protein degradation.

Prof Ciechanover is a Distinguished Professor at the Center for Cancer and Vascular Biology, the Rappaport Faculty of Medicine and Research Institute at the Technion, Haifa, Israel.

For more information on Prof Ciechanover, please visit

<http://nobelprize.org/chemistry/laureates/2004/ciechanover-autobio.html>

5) **Professor Paul Davies**

Professor of Natural Philosophy, Australian Centre for Astrobiology, Macquarie University

Winner of the 1995 Templeton Prize for his work on science and religion.

Prof Davies is theoretical physicist, cosmologist, astrobiologist, author and broadcaster. His research has ranged from the origin of the universe to the origin of life, and includes the properties of black holes, the nature of time and quantum field theory. In April 1999 the asteroid 1992 OG was officially named (6870) Paul Davies in his honour.

For more information on Professor Davies, please visit

<http://aca.mq.edu.au/PaulDavies/pdavies.html>