

## DID YOU KNOW

### International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO)

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Educational olympiads are organised across the world with an aim to bring forth the most gifted minds together to compete in various disciplines. Brilliant students are identified through regional and national competitions, and those who make it to the top are invited for a world-level competition.

One such unique olympiad is the International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO). It is the World Championship Mathematics Competition for high school students organised annually. The first IMO was held in Romania in 1959, with only seven participating countries. Since then, it has expanded, and today, about 100 countries participate in the annual contest.



*Logo of the IMO*

In India, the initial phase of the Mathematics Olympiad is conducted through the Regional Mathematical Olympiad (RMO) at 25 centres. An examination for aspiring mathematicians of higher secondary level is held. It consists of six questions, which are to be solved in three hours. Thirty students are shortlisted from each centre. These 750 students attend the Indian National Mathematical Olympiad (INMO), which is conducted under the aegis of the National Board of Higher Mathematics (NBHM), in collaboration with the Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education, which is the nodal centre. Of these 750 students, 30 are shortlisted to attend a one-month training programme at the Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education, Mumbai. and then, six students are shortlisted on the basis of a variety of selection assessments. The programme aims at promoting excellence in mathematics among pre-university students.

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At the IMO, each day students are given three difficult questions for seven points each, in up to two languages of their choice to be solved within 4 hours 30 minutes daily for two days. The questions are framed by mathematicians of various countries. Obtaining one or two points out of 42 is appreciated by the panel. Bagging seven points for one question is treated as an extraordinary achievement. There have been instances, wherein the students have come up with a simpler solution to a question.

In 2016, the 57th IMO was hosted by the International Mathematical Olympiad, Hong Kong Committee Limited, on 11 and 12 July. A total of 608 students from across 100 countries and five continents took part in it. Six students from India participated in the Olympiad. Kapil Pause from Goa bagged the silver medal, while the others received bronze medals. It is laudable that none of the participants from India

came without a medal.

The 58th IMO was hosted in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 12 to 23 July 2017. The Republic of Korea was declared as the winner. India ranked 52nd among 111 countries. India bagged 11 gold, 63 silver and 68 bronze medals, and 26 honourable mentions.

India has been participating in the IMO since 1989. Any number of attempts can be made in the IMO. Students can start participating in the olympiad from Class IV.

### **POST-SCRIPT**

Unfortunately, even in this age of technology, there are some parts in India where the awareness of IMO is negligible. Information about IMO should be disseminated by teachers and schools to students and their parents. Informal interactions in small groups on mathematics, including cyberspace, should also be encouraged. Besides, an attempt to open students' minds to the world of mathematics should be made.

### **REFERENCES**

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