

CHEMISTRY OLYMPIAD SRI LANKA 2018 CONDUCTED TO RECOGNIZE YOUNG TALENTS IN CHEMISTRY

The finals of the Chemistry Olympiad Sri Lanka (COSL) competition for the year 2018 and training sessions were held on last 17th and 18th May at the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon premises, Rajagiriaya. Finalists for COSL were selected from the results of the preliminary examination conducted by the Institute in March 2018. They represented most of the provinces in the country including the North and East. This competition consists of both theory and practical examinations. Prior to the examinations one and half day training sessions including Chemistry practical sessions were conducted by the lecturers of the College of Chemical Sciences of IChemC together with their fellow university academics. In addition, a social evening was organized to foster networking of students.

The IChemC annually organize the local Chemistry Olympiad Competition from 2017 onwards for the G.C.E. (A/L) students with the objectives of recognizing and rewarding talented Chemistry students in the country and popularizing the subject among students. The IChemC has been given the official status to represent International Chemistry Olympiad (IChO) competition by its steering committee recently. Accordingly, IChemC is planning to participate at the IChO as observers from this year and to send a team for the IChO from Sri Lanka for the first time in 2020.

The International Chemistry Olympiad (IChO) is a competition organized for the secondary school students of all levels from all over the globe with the objective of stimulating young aspiring minds to achieve excellence in Chemistry. IChO is just one out of the 12 International Science Olympiads held in the world. The rest cover other disciplines, such as Mathematics, Physics, Biology, *etc.* IChO headquarters is based in Bratislava, Slovakia of the former Eastern Bloc. This event began in 1968 with the participation from Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary. Other Eastern European countries joined the program subsequently. Currently around 80 countries participate in this annual competition held for the world's most talented secondary school level Chemistry students. This year's IChO competition will be held in Slovakia and Czech Republic.

The current President of the IChemC Dr Poshitha Premarathne is very much keen in making this local Chemistry Olympiad competition a success and to popularize Chemistry among the young generation. In his inaugural speech he mentioned that IChemC will be given all the support to send a team to IChO in 2020 and hopefully bring pride and recognition to the country. Prof Sudantha Liyanage, Dean of the Science Faculty of University of Sri Jayawardhanapura and who will be the next President of the institute awarded certificates to the participants. At the end of the event he stressed the importance of organizing this type of events to popularize Chemistry. Most of the participants expressed their satisfaction about the experience they gained through this event. One of the finalists Ms Pamudi Mahinsa of Sangamitha Vidyala Galle commended that this event was an unforgettable experience and not just a competition for the participants. Many other students told to us that practical they performed using latest analytical instruments which they have never experienced before, and encouraged their interest towards Chemistry.

Winners of the COSL competition will receive medals and prizes at the annual sessions of the IChemC scheduled to be held on the 12th June at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute. In addition they will receive full/partial scholarships to follow the Graduateship Programme in Chemistry conducted at the College of Chemical Sciences.

Winners were selected based on the results of theory and practical examinations as stated below.

1	Pavindu Udeesha Jayasekera	Richmond College	Gold
2	Anuki Chamathka Pasqual	Visaka Vidyalaya, Colombo	Silver
3	Prabath Bandara Kapukotuwege Sanjana Gimhani Kapukotuwa	Maliyadewa Girls School	Bronz
4	Rathnayake Mudiyansele Sugath Ravindu Sanwara	Ananda College, Col 10	Bronz
5	Thinupa Anjana Wijetunga	Richmond College	Bronz
6	Herathmudiyansele Charuka Nishala Kulathunga Bandara	R/E Ehaliyagoda National School	Merit Awards
7	Mahanaida Badalgei Shakindi Vihangana	Sujatha Vidyalaya	Merit Awards
8	Disanayaka Mudiyansele Uvindu Praveen Sumanasekara	Badulla Madya Maha Vidyalaya	Merit Awards
9	Sachintha Tashen Paranga Narangoda	Richmond College	Merit Awards
10	Sivathasan Tharsikan	Jaffna Hindu College	Merit Awards
11	Arulanantham Abbinanthan	Jaffna Hindu College	Merit Awards

The two day event and the all island preliminary examination conducted in this regard were sponsored by the IChemC and conducted free of charge for the school children. We would appreciate for any sponsorships given to us by various organizations in order to promote this local competition in the future.

Please visit the FB link <https://www.facebook.com/ChemOlympiadSL/> to see more updates about this event.

Dr. Chinthaka N. Ratnaweera
Chairman
Chemistry Olympiad Sri Lanka

The names of the 26 finalists and their schools are as follows.

Name	School
Sajini Nadara Boyagoda	Girl's High School, Kandy
Sanjana Gimhani Kapukotuwa	Maliyadewa Girls School, Kurunegala
Sivathanan Tharsikan	Jaffna Hindu College, Jaffna
Ashika Kavindi Rathnayake	Girl's High School, Kandy
Nilushi Navodya Dhanapola	Mahamaya Girl's College, Kandy
Thinupa Anjana Wijetunga	Richmond College, Galle
Uvindu Praveen Sumanasekara	Badulla Madya Maha Vidyalaya, Badulla
Anisha Jude Joachimson	Chundikulai Girls' College, Jaffna
Jeyanandaraja Kirushikan	Jaffna Hindu College, Jaffna
Arulanathan Abbinathan	Jaffna Hindu College, Jaffna
Charuka Nishala Kulathunga Bandara	R/E Ehaliyagoda National School, Ehaliyagoda
Pamudi Mahinsa Jayalathge	Sanghamitta Balika Vidyalaya, Galle
Manthi Nisansa Weerathunga	Southlands College, Galle
Sachintha Tashen Paranga Narangoda	Richmond College, Galle
Sithum Minthaka	Ananda College, Col 10
Pavindu Udeesha Jayasekara	Richmond College
Varnakulendran Anathiriyen	Sri-Koneswara Hindu College, Trinco
Sugath Ravindu Sanwara	Ananda College, Col 10
Samith Kavishka Karunathilake	Badulla Madya Maha Vidyalaya, Badulla
Dewni Liyanage	Southlands College, Galle
Anuki Chamathka Pasqual	Visaka Vidyalaya, Colombo 5
Ishani Udeshiaka Kumari	Girl's High School, Kandy
Thayaparan Nisan	Jaffna Hindu College, Jaffna
Janith Mayara Bandara Dissanayake	Trinity College, Kandy
Kavin Tharusha Pathirage	D S Senanayake College, Col 7
Shakindi Vihangana	Sujatha Vidyalaya, Matara



Figure1: Dr Medha Gunarathne giving instructions for students on Organic Chemistry practical



Dr Ireshika de Silva during her presentation on 'Introduction to NMR spectroscopy'



Dr Ranmal Gunathilaka giving instructions to students during Analytical Chemistry practical session.



Prof Sudantha Liyanage awarding a certificate to one of the finalists



COSL 2018 Finalists, organizers and lecturers