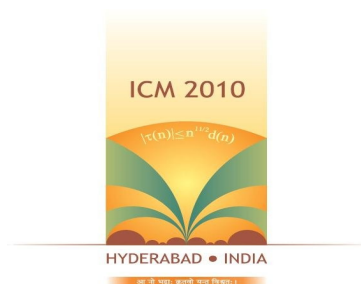


President of India to Inaugurate Mathematical Meet



Shrimati Prathibha Patil, the honourable President of India will inaugurate the International Congress of Mathematicians (ICM) which will take place in Hyderabad during August 19–27 of this year.

The ICM is by far the biggest and most prestigious international meeting of mathematicians. It is a periodic event taking place once in every four years without a break (except for the war years) since the first one at Zurich, Switzerland in 1897. About 3000 delegates are expected to gather at Hyderabad. It is for the first time that the Congress is being held in India (and only the third time in Asia – Japan in 1990 and China in 2002 were the previous Asian hosts).

The President will also give away the Fields Medal, the most prestigious global award for mathematical achievement, which is traditionally announced and given away at the ICMs. There can be up to four awardees for the Medal. The Fields medal named after J M Fields, a Canadian mathematician who left a small legacy for it, is awarded only to mathematicians under the age of 40.

Winners of three other prestigious awards will also receive their prizes from the President of India. These are:

- the Nevanlinna Prize – named after Rolf Herman Nevanlinna, a famous Finnish mathematician – for work on mathematical aspects of computer science;
- the Gauss prize – named after the German mathematician Carl Friedrich Gauss, one of the greatest names in mathematics of all time -- for mathematical work that has had practical applications of great import; and,
- the Chern prize – named after the Chinese mathematician Shiing Shen Chern, one of the greatest geometers of the 20th Century – for outstanding life-long contributions to mathematics. This newly instituted award will be given for the first time at the ICM, Hyderabad.

That the Congress is being held in India is a recognition by the international mathematical community that the country is a player to reckon with in the world of mathematics.

Successive governments in India since independence have been very supportive of mathematics, a policy set in motion by independent India's first visionary Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. The Indian mathematical community is grateful to our revered Rashtrapatiji for this gracious gesture which reflects the regard that the government as well as the general public in the country hold for mathematics.
