International Congress of Mathematicians 2014 to convene in Seoul

The 27th International Congress of Mathematicians (ICM) will take place at the COEX Convention and Exhibition Center in Seoul, Korea from 13 to 21 August, 2014. More than 5,000 mathematicians from around the world have registered so far to attend the event. The mainstay of the congress is the scientific program, comprising over two hundred invited addresses covering recent developments in essentially all areas of mathematics and its applications. The congress is also the forum for the International Mathematical Union (IMU) to award the Fields Medal, a prize awarded to 2-4 mathematicians not over 40 years of age, often regarded as the highest honor accorded to a mathematician. In addition, the Nevanlinna Prize for work on mathematical aspects of Information Science, the Gauss prize for substantial applications of mathematics, and the Chern Medal for lifetime achievement will be awarded at the congress.

A notable special lecture will be delivered on the last day of the congress by the Chinese-American mathematician Yitang Zhang, who astounded the world last year with his dramatic paper reporting progress on the twin prime conjecture, which he achieved amid conditions of substantial adversity stretching over several decades.

This congress will be the 27th instalment since the first one in Zuerich in 1897. Since the second event in Paris in 1900, at which David Hilbert announced his influential list of 23 problems, the congress has met once every four years, with various exceptions stemming from political circumstances.

In addition to the congress itself, 51 satellite conferences on a vast array of topics will take place in diverse locations in the region including neighboring countries.

NANUM Program and MENAO Symposium: Mathematics in Developing Nations

A notable component of this ICM is the focus on mathematical developments in regions of the world emerging from economic deprivation. *Nanum* (a Korean word meaning `share' or `divide') was initiated by the Organizing Committee and offers grants ranging between 1,200 and 2,500 US dollars to 1,000 mathematicians from developing nations.

The idea for this program arose from a collective will of the Korean mathematical community to acknowledge the gracious help it received from established centers of mathematical research and education in the course of the twentieth century. As with many other regions of the world, having struggled with the throes of industrialization and the tumult of war, it has been noted many times in Korea that the rapid integration of Korean institutions of higher learning into the global network of scholars in the later part of the century would not have been possible without the sense of universal openness in research and education that the international mathematical community has come to take for granted. The Nanum program is offered as a token of appreciation and as a continuation of the collaborative effort to spread the benefits of mathematical education and discourse to all corners of the world.

A specific event devoted to this theme is the MENAO (Mathematics in Emerging Nations: Achievements and Opportunities) symposium that will take place on 12 August just before the ICM. It will feature personal stories of mathematicians as well as country-specific development stories, both from the perspective of mathematicians in those countries and from the perspective of their international partners. A particular effort will be made to

explore the link between economic and mathematical development. Over 400 attendees are invited to discuss the progress made in developing nations in mathematics and mathematics education, and its implications to their societies.

Public Events

There will be numerous events aimed at the general public during the congress. The opening night will feature a public lecture by James Simons and the last night one by the winner of the Lelavaati Prize for increasing public awareness of mathematics (to be announced).

Mr. Simons, a member of the mathematics faculty of Stony Brook University, had made fundamental contributions to geometry, for which he was elected to the United States National Academy of Sciences in 2014. In 1982, he founded Renaissance Technologies, which eventually grew into one of the most successful hedge funds in the world. He was named in 2006 by the Financial Times as `the world's smartest billionaire'.

Here are some other events of general interest:

--The baduk (go) program, featuring lectures about baduk and mathematics and the opportunity for members of the public to pit their skills against professional players of the highest caliber.

--A screening of the film {\em Comment j'ai d\'etest\'e les maths} (How I came to hate mathematics) by Olivier Peyon.

--As an affiliated event, Bridges 2014, the world's largest interdisciplinary conference on mathematics and art, will be held at the Gwacheon Science Museum from 14 to 19, August, with a large number of exhibitions, performances, and lectures open to the public.

For more information, members of the general public are invited to look into the `events' link on the page http://www.icm2014.org/en/events/popularization/activities1

General Assembly of the International Mathematical Union

The congress will be preceded by the IMU General Assembly on 10 and 11 August in Gyeongju, Korea. Every four years, the IMU holds its General Assembly a few days before the ICM. The member countries of the IMU, which at the present number 146, get together to make decisions that will affect the future of mathematics in the world for the next four years. The meeting is always held in the country responsible for organizing the Congress, although in a different city. The city of Gyeongju, with its deep cultural heritage and historical sites such as the Gyeongju East Palace Garden and the Chomseongdae Observatory, will also be a channel for providing to the delegates a historical perspective on Korean culture and science.

The Seoul ICM 2014 Public and Media Relations Committee

e-mail: news@icm2014.org