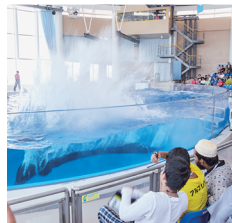
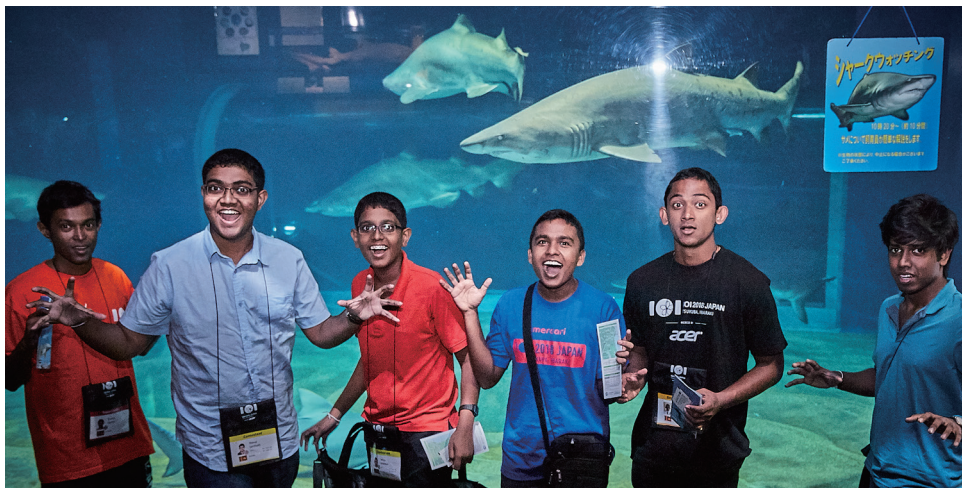


An Otaku Shrine and Monsters of the Deep

The science and technology of IOI 2018, plus all competition stresses, were today left behind as international participants boarded coaches for a full day tour connecting back to nature. Bus No.10 carried Teams France, Philippines, Poland, Palestine and Romania and was hosted by tour guide Miyuki who, during the 1-hour ride to Ibaraki, gave a statistics-filled in-bus lecture about Japan, its people and language. On arrival the weather was bright and sunny, just right for a walk around the quiet woods and grounds of Hitachi Seaside Park (separate box). After an obento lunchbox in a local gymnasium, teams, leaders and guests visited Oarai Shrine next to the ocean (separate box). As a 'Shinto' shrine, this compact hall reveres the spirits that exist in trees, rocks, wind, ocean - indeed, every part of nature. So, it required something of a mind-bend to learn that Oarai Shrine is now a pilgrimage site for anime fans. Hundreds of tiny wooden prayer tablets, each painted with manga self-portraits, and offered by otaku pilgrims now

hang inside the shrine's inner sanctuary next to a bill-board of life-size anime heroes. But IOI visitors were more interested in the chance to paddle in the Pacific Ocean just down the steps from the shrine. Sandals / trainers off, toes in. It was a pebble beach and a stone skipping contest began spontaneously. (Some people just can't miss a chance to compete). The smell of the sea was refreshing and a prequel to visiting Oarai Aquarium, two minutes away (separate box). Here, the tank of one-directional sardines, eerie glowing jelly fish, and awesome shark-filled tanks were impressive. The tour finale was a dolphin and sealion show which splashed more than a few front-row contestants - well, what else do you expect when a few tons of acrobatic sea-life deliberately belly-flops in front of you. (Leaders sensibly sat at the back). Did anyone note the irony of the sushi-bar and fresh seafood located next to the gift shop and exit? Some good food for thought perhaps.



IOI 2018 JAPAN
TSUKUBA, IBARAKI

30th International Olympiad in Informatics 2018
September 1 - 8, 2018 Tsukuba, Ibaraki

Vol.6 Thursday, September 6, 2018

A Bite-sized Thought

'Obento' Lunches: Today (as on Day 2), lunch was provided in the form of a Japanese style lunch-box, called an 'obento'. Making obento is virtually an art-form in itself in Japan - a neat, compact box containing a wide selection of tasty food morsels, with many shapes and textures, all meticulously set out side by side inside a single tray box without spilling into one another or mixing. So an obento serves as a neat illustration of informatics principles and ideals - complex and varied yet efficient and harmonious - everything available where it should be, and sustaining someone's life.



Thursday's Schedule September 6, 2018

Time	Contestants	Leaders	Guest
6:30-	Transfer by Bus (KEK→NITS)		
07:00-08:30	Breakfast 7:00-8:30	Breakfast 7:00-9:00	Breakfast 7:00- (Each Hotel)
08:30-09:00	Transfer by Bus		
	Departure from NITS@9:30	Departure from TICC@9:00	Departure from TICC@9:00
09:00-18:00	Excursion Ibaraki Prefecture Sightseeing Aqua World Oarai Oarai Isosaki Shrine Hitachi Seaside Park (Transfer by Bus)		
18:00-19:30	Dinner 18:00-19:30 Transfer By Bus (NITS→ KEK)	Dinner 18:00-20:00 (Multi-Purpose-Hall and Conference Room101.102)	
19:30	Free Time	Free Time	Free Time

■ TICC : Tsukuba International Congress Center
 ■ TSUKUBA CAPIO
 ■ NITS
 ■ Excursion

Places Visited

Aqua World Oarai:

This is one of Japan's biggest aquariums, with many different environments to explore across the 5-story building. The nine separate zones are home to nearly 70,000 sea creatures from almost 580 different species including fish, birds and mammals. While the dolphins are arguably the most skillful, the penguins the most comical and the sea otters the cutest, the biggest stars of this ocean wonderland are the sharks which represent the greatest and fiercest collection in Japan. No fewer than 45 species of these majestic, apex predators glide through the water, inspiring both awe and admiration, (plus a little terror too).



Oarai Isosaki (Jinja) Shrine:

Oarai is the name of the rugged coastline and town near to the ancient Oarai Isosaki shrine. The name of the Kamiiso-no-torii gate fronting the shrine and Pacific Ocean to the east translates as "gate of the seashore gods".



According to Japan's most ancient history texts, this is the point where two gods, said to have created Japan, descended in the year 856AD (Japan's Heian Period). The shrine was built to honor and enshrine them. Oarai Isosaki Jinja is famed for its intensely spiritual views as the sun rises up from the distant horizon. The stone torii gate, standing on the furthest rock, appears to frame the sun while the powerful waves crash over its base. It has stone lion-dogs Ah and Un guarding the inner sanctum and, unusually, others in the shape of frogs.

Hitachi Seaside Park:

As the name suggests, this huge nature park within Ibaraki Prefecture is on the Japanese coast, facing the Pacific Ocean. Almost 200 hectares of this beautiful environment of sand dunes, forests, grasslands and lakes can be toured. Nature-lovers come here throughout the year to witness the views transformed by the seasonal flora and greenery. Music fans were here just last month for the annual Rock in Japan Festival. As well as enjoying the fresh air of the walking trails, there is an amusement park with a putter golf garden, a BMX track, ceramic arts studio, cafes, and various other activities plus breathtaking panoramic views from atop the "Flower Ring" Ferris wheel.



Tokyo, A Capital of Statistics:

On both Wednesday and Friday IOI guests have the fortune to spend much of the day in Tokyo, the Japanese capital less than an hour from Tsukuba. As depicted so vividly in the thrilling 2018 movie 'Pacific Rim: Uprising' this is the post-futuristic city cradled within view of Japan's symbolic Mount Fuji. (The older generation only knows Tokyo as Godzilla's stomping ground). The Akihabara area is the world capital of manga and anime, and birthplace of characters like virtual artist IA. The real-world people of Japan increasingly live in urban communities and Tokyo is one of the world's mega-cities. Its greater metropolitan area is home to over 39 million. Such statistics and the logistics involved in managing the city are staggering, and Tokyo's transportation systems more complex than IOI 2018's image of 87 connected red dots. Yet every train runs on-time, to the minute. Every square meter of space is micro-managed and, at a cost of 300,000 USD/1m2, it has to be. Yes, it is crowded but it's clean, tidy and safe. As we say in Japanese, that's "sugoi [amazing]!" or, to use current Shinjuku slang, "yabai" [cool].



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