



SAASTA
South African Agency for Science
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Media Release

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For immediate release:

Top Science learners honoured at the National Science Olympiad awards

The South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement (SAASTA) announced the top learners of the 53rd National Science Olympiad last week on Thursday (6 July 2017) at the glittering awards ceremony held at Gallagher Convention Centre, Midrand, in Gauteng.

The awards ceremony honoured South Africa's top young science learners in various categories such as Top Winners for Life Sciences, Physical Sciences and Top Learners from Previously Disadvantaged schools.

SAASTA presented awards to Angus Thring from Bishops High in the Western Cape, was the top learner for the Physical Science stream with a score of 94% and Freddy Mwaisyangeng from the African Leadership Academy in Gauteng won the Life Science stream award with a score of 75%. Thring received a special award and R30 000 prize money.

Two top learners from previously disadvantaged schools from Limpopo Province with a score of 63% were also honoured, Khodani Namalamangwa from Thengiwwe High and Anzo Tshipetane from Mbilwi Secondary.

Mbilwi Secondary school in Limpopo was awarded as school with the highest participation with 1 164 entries, and Derek Kobe Secondary, also in Limpopo province, had the second highest participation with 650 entries.

The top national performers also stand a chance to win an all-expenses-paid trip to the London International Youth Science Forum (LIYSF). Four learners were selected to attend the London International Youth Science Forum.

The London International Youth Science Forum is a two-week residential event held at Imperial College London, with lectures and demonstrations from leading scientists, and visits to industrial sites, research centres, scientific institutions and organisations, including world class laboratories and universities.

Delivering a keynote address, Minister of Science and Technology, Ms Naledi Pandor, said “Olympiads are a very important means of encouraging young people to become scientists and of recognising their hard work and bright ideas”.

“South Africa and the African continent need to develop strategies to increase the number of young people competent in maths and science and ready to play a role in Science, Technology and Engineering,” she said.

“It is clear from developments in science and technology in the past 30 years, that future professionals and entrepreneurs have to be ready to assume leadership in a world in which digital technologies will play a key role. We will have to ensure that every town, village and township feels the impact of what is being called the 4th industrial revolution,” she added.

SAASTA Managing Director, Dr Jabulani Nukeri, said that since its inception in 1964, the National Science Olympiad has been identified as a key platform to identify talent in STEMI across the country and some SADC countries for grades 10 to 12 learners.

Dr Nukeri thanked Harmony Gold Mining Company Limited for being the main sponsors of these Olympiads over the past eight years, at times under very challenging economic conditions, and further thanked them for believing in the youth of the SADC.

The National Science Olympiad is one of the flagship projects of the South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement. Since 2005, the 53-year-old project has offered learners in grades 10 to 12 an exciting opportunity to compete in science with fellow learners from Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries such as Lesotho, Zimbabwe and Namibia.

In 2017, about 37 000 learners from all nine provinces and three SADC countries participated, including learners from Harmony Gold Mining areas in Gauteng, North West and Free State provinces.

The Olympiad contributes toward excellence in science and has great potential to improve participation levels of previously excluded groups and make science and maths an attractive career choice for learners.

The annual competition comprises an examination, and top learners and schools stand a chance to win exciting prizes. The Olympiad comprises two streams: Physical Science (Physics and Chemistry) and Life Science. Learners can choose to write either the Physical Science or Life Science papers.

The main aim of the competition is to identify talent, to encourage excellence in science education and to stimulate interest in the sciences. It seeks to inspire young people to consider careers in science and technology.

Ends

Sidebar

Learners to attend the London International Youth Science Forum (LIYSF)

Name & Surname	Gender	School name	Province	Grade	%
Top Learner – Physical Science					
Jailiang Yu	Male	Crawford College Pretoria	Gauteng	12	80
Amenta Sibi	Female	King Edward College	Eastern Cape	12	80
Top Learner – Life Science					
Ambroise Muller	Male	Redhill School	Gauteng	12	67
Top Girl learner – Physical Science					
Anzo Tshipetane	Female	Mbilwi Secondary	Limpopo	12	63

Top Learners per grade (grades 10 and 11)					
Initials & Surname	Gender	School Name	Province	Grade	%
GB Mitchell	Male	Pretoria Boys High	Gauteng	11	67

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ABOUT THE NATIONAL SCIENCE OLYMPIAD™

Science Olympiads are used internationally as a means of promoting science and excellence in science. SAASTA's National Science Olympiad not only contributes towards excellence in science, but also has huge potential in expanding participation levels of previously excluded groups whilst simultaneously building capability in the sciences.

SAASTA's National Science Olympiad is a project that started in 1964, initially for grade 12 learners with the objective of promoting science. Now in its 53rd year, the competition continues to be one of SAASTA's flagship projects. Since 2005, the project has been offering learners in grade 10 to 12 an exciting opportunity to compete and interact in the science arena with fellow learners from all nine provinces in South Africa, Southern African Development Countries (SADC) such as Lesotho, Namibia, and Zimbabwe and also their counterparts in Australia.

The competition is an annual written examination comprising two papers/streams: Physical Science (Physics and Chemistry) and Life Science (Biology). Learners can select which stream they want to compete in and their schools enter them accordingly. The top performing learners and schools are then awarded based on excellence. The top national performers from several categories also stand a chance of receiving an all-expenses-paid trip to the London International Youth Science Forum and the Australian National Science Focus Week. The main focus of the competition is to encourage excellence in science education and to stimulate interest in the sciences. It further seeks to inspire young people to consider careers in science, engineering, and technology (SET).

To ensure that talent in SET is identified and nurtured, a group of 120 learners who excelled or demonstrated potential during the Olympiad examination are traditionally invited to participate in a Science Focus Week during the July school holidays. The activities consist of stimulating lectures, excursions, relevant industry visits, and other fun events. This culminates into a high profile awards ceremony where prizes are awarded to deserving learners and schools.

ABOUT THE SOUTH AFRICAN AGENCY FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ADVANCEMENT (SAASTA)

SAASTA is a business unit of the National Research Foundation (NRF) with the mandate to advance public awareness, appreciation and engagement of science, engineering and technology in South Africa.

SAASTA's contribution to the NRF's vision is to grow the pool of quality learners today who will become the scientists and innovators of tomorrow.

It aims to be the leading science advancement agency in the country by promoting and communicating the value and impact of science, technology and innovation in a dynamic

knowledge economy. It also intends to contribute significantly towards building a science, engineering and technology (SET) human resource base. For more information on the operations and programs within the NRF please visit www.saasta.ac.za

ABOUT THE NATIONAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION (NRF):

The National Research Foundation (NRF) was established on 1 April 1999 as an independent statutory body in accordance with the National Research Foundation Act. The NRF is a key public entity responsible for supporting the development of human resources for research and innovation in all fields of science and technology. The organisation is one of the major players in educating and training a new generation of scientists able to deal with South African and African needs. The organisation encourages public awareness and appreciation of science, engineering and technology, and facilitates dialogue between science and society. Its vision is to contribute to a prosperous South Africa based on a knowledge economy. For more information on the operations and programs within the NRF please visit www.nrf.ac.za