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5 participants, 5 gold: India shines at Physics Olympiad

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MUMBAI: In the best ever performance by an Indian team, each of the five students representing the country bagged gold medals at the International Physics Olympiad (IPhO 2018) held in Lisbon, Portugal, last week.

This is the first time in 21 years that all five students have brought gold home. China is the only other country, among 86 others, to bag the maximum gold medals.

Mumbai's Bhaskar Gupta, Lay Jain from Kota, Rajkot's Nishant Abhangi, Pawan Goyal from Jaipur and Siddharth Tiwary from Kolkata represented the country at the 49th IPhO this year.

Of the 396 students who participated from across the world, 42 won gold medals after a two-stage competition.

Praveen Pathak, scientific officer at Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education, a national centre of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), which led the international team, said India performed exceptionally well this year.

"We have been participating in the competition since 1998 and this is the first year all team members bagged gold medals. Thrice in the past, we have managed four golds and one silver," said Pathak.

While Jain and Goyal were among the top 10 rankers for JEE (Advanced) this year, Gupta and Tiwary, too, had good ranks. Three of the students have opted for IIT-Bombay, while Jain is headed to MIT, US, to pursue a joint course in computer science and physics. Tiwary, who has opted for engineering physics at IIT-Bombay, is keen on pursuing research. Abhangi, the youngest, is in Class XII and will be preparing for JEE (Advanced).

Speaking about the competition, Goyal said, "The experimental component was difficult, but the theoretical exam was easier and three of us scored between 29 and 30 out of 30 marks." Juhu resident, Bhaskar Gupta, a chess enthusiast, too, found the experimental component tougher.

The five were picked through a rigorous selection process by the Homi Bhabha Centre. The team will be felicitated by the centre on Monday.