

Nº 5

Thursday, July 9



PHYSICS IN ACTION

BEYOND THE EXAMINATIONS



Host City: Bucaramanga, Santander, Colombia.

WELCOME TO A NEW DAY OF BALANCE AND DISCOVERY!

This morning's schedule for the students has been designed to ease the tensions accumulated over the past few days and to strengthen the spirit of international friendship. The day begins with guided relaxation and mindfulness sessions to help relieve stress, followed by free walks around the city and visits to cultural exchange fairs.

For the **Team Leaders**, however, the day calls for the highest level of mental sharpness. This morning, they will meet with the **Local Academic Committee** during moderation and coordination sessions, where they will carefully review and discuss every procedure, criterion, and evaluation reflected in their students' examination papers, ensuring that each decision is made with fairness, accuracy, and academic rigor.

Today, applied physics is experienced on two very different yet deeply connected levels. Students encounter it through the biophysics of their own bodies—regulating their heart rate through controlled breathing, reducing mental entropy, and allowing their nervous systems to regain balance. At the same time, the Team Leaders apply the principles of physics to the dynamics of negotiation, where the balance of arguments, the symmetry in applying the rules, and analytical precision must come together to ensure that every fraction of a point faithfully reflects the efforts of each delegation.

May this new day bring each of you a true sense of balance, reminding us that both rest and the defense of knowledge are essential to the growth of every scientist.

Enjoy every moment of this unique experience!

IPhO 2026 Team – Colombia



Gastronomy

Bucaramanga's gastronomy has a distinctive personality: it's hearty, flavorful, and bursting with taste. Its dishes reflect the strength of its people, rich in character and tradition. "Mute" is one of those dishes served in generous portions that tastes like home; "Cabro con Pepitoria" retains the region's intense flavor; and the golden, crispy Santanderean "arepa" accompanies every meal for Bucaramanga families.

But, Bucaramanga, it's not just the local cuisine that's delightful. The Beautiful City is renowned for having the best fast food in the country. Burgers with intense flavors, "papas locas", hot dogs, and "desgranados", all served with "tartara" sauce, the star of our culinary scene. In nearby towns, you'll also find traditional flavors that are quintessentially Santanderean. The MaracuMango in Girón and the "Obleas" from Floridablanca are must-visit stops on any itinerary.

EVENT SCHEDULE

DAY - 5

JULY 9TH: EXCURSION 2



STUDENTS

- 06:30 - 08:30:** Breakfast
- 08:30 - 09:00:** Transfer to Girón
- 09:00 - 13:00:** Cultural tour of Girón
- 13:00 - 16:00:** Lunch at Club Campestre sponsored by Squarepoint
- 16:00 - 17:00:** Transfer to “El Santísimo” Eco-park
- 17:00 - 19:30:** Visit to El Santísimo
- 19:30 - 20:30:** Transfer to assigned hotels
- 20:30 - 21:30:** Dinner
- 21:30 - 23:00:** Free time

LEADERS

- 06:30 - 08:00:** Breakfast
- 09:00 - 13:30:** Marking
- 13:30 - 15:30:** Lunch sponsored by Jane Street
- 15:30 - 16:30:** Transfer to “El Santísimo” Eco-park
- 16:30 - 19:00:** Visit to El Santísimo
- 19:00 - 20:00:** Transfer to hotel
- 20:00 - 21:30:** Dinner

OBSERVERS

- 06:30 - 08:00:** Breakfast
- 08:30 - 09:00:** Transfer to Holiday Inn Hotel
- 09:00 - 13:30:** Marking
- 13:30 - 15:30:** Lunch sponsored by Jane Street
- 15:30 - 16:30:** Transfer to “El Santísimo” Eco-park
- 16:30 - 19:00:** Visit to El Santísimo
- 19:00 - 20:00:** Transfer to hotel
- 20:00 - 21:30:** Dinner

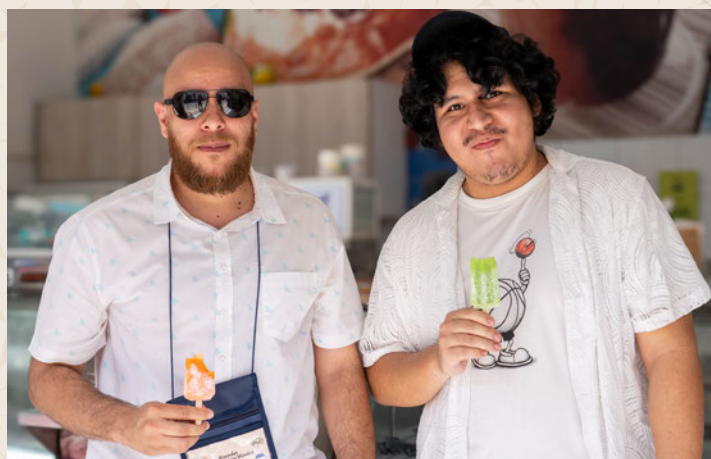
A TOUR WITH A **SANTANDER** ACCENT

While the 2026 IPhO students tackled the theory exam in Neomundo, their leaders embarked on a new experience: discovering Bucaramanga through its history, culture, and cuisine.

The tour began at Casa del Libro, in the city center, where participants were welcomed into a cultural space steeped in history. They enjoyed poetry readings and regional jokes told in the local Santaderan slang, and also learned about Bucaramanga's history—how the city began to take shape and the stories that have shaped its identity over time.

The visit then continued at the Casa Alemana, where the atmosphere shifted from storytelling to tasting. There, they explored Colombian culture through traditional flavors such as aborrajado, carimañola, and obleas. And since they know in Santander how to make a cultural visit even better, the experience also included a tasting of regional cocoa, which provided a sweet break midway through the day.

While the students immersed themselves in the text, their leaders found themselves face-to-face with the streets of Bucaramanga, enjoyed the stories told aloud and the local humor, and sampled a little bit of the flavors that speak to the community's region. Bucaramanga was revealed to them in this way, poem by poem, joke by joke, and bite by bite.



PROFESSOR ACADEMIC COMMITTEE



EDUARDO ZALAMEA

November 1992, the first Ibero-American Physics Olympiad, I have been involved with the great IPhO organization. I was a physics professor for physics students at the National University of Colombia, where I twice received the “Docente Excepcional” (Exceptional Teacher) award, and when the Physics Department of the National University celebrated its 50th anniversary, I received the diploma for “Best Professor of the Basic Courses in the Physics Program”.

My greatest fulfillment as a teacher and as a person has come from being a professor who prepared physics Olympiad students for over 30 years. Knowing that in so many parts of the world there are former Olympiad participants who greet me with a warm “Hello Eduardo” is my greatest life satisfaction.

FORMER IPhO OLYMPIANS



PhD. Carlos Zarama

“The Physics Olympiad changed my life and motivated me to pursue dreams that seemed unattainable. After the Olympiad, I pursued a double major at the University of the Andes in Mechanical Engineering and Electronic Engineering. My thesis was in robotics, and I published a paper in ASME.

After graduating, I started working in the oil industry and stayed there for nine years. Among the many projects I worked on, the most notable was the Cusiana gas processing plant, which supplies gas to Bogotá. At the end of this period, I decided to apply to my dream university, MIT, and I was accepted. Having participated in the Olympiad undoubtedly helped me achieve this. At MIT, I studied for an MBA full-time. In those two years, my life changed dramatically again: not only did I meet my wife, with whom I have two beautiful children, but it also opened doors to new opportunities and adventures.”

Juan Manuel Caicedo

In 1999, I was surprised to receive the invitation to the Olympiad training camp after the school year I had just finished with difficulty. Anyone so fortunate would be struck by the quality of the teachers and the content taught, by the pedagogy that encourages reflection, responsibility, freedom, and personal growth, right from the first day of classes.

Participating in the Olympiad and the contact with the teachers and classmates, all of them inspiring, changed my life, opened doors for me, and boosted my self-esteem and confidence. I treasure my two gold medals from the national Olympiads, along with other sports medals, as well as the memories of those days and of the Ibero-American Olympiads in Jaca, Spain, and the international competitions in Antalya, Turkey, and Bali, Indonesia.

What doors opened for me thanks to the Colombian Physics Olympiad? A double degree in mechanical and electronic engineering from the University of the Andes, a master's degree in mechanical design from the National Institute of Applied Sciences in Lyon and the Polytechnic University of Catalonia in Barcelona. Thanks to the Olympics and the doors they opened for me, I was able to work in a leading manufacturing company in France, specifically in the field of flexible underwater pipelines for oil and gas transport. I joined the company's Research and Development department 15 years ago, and today I work as a project manager in the project management department. There, I'm responsible for the most complex manufacturing project the company has ever undertaken, according to the feasibility department, given its technical complexity. Undoubtedly, thanks to the Olympics, and certainly, and it's worth mentioning, there were some very difficult moments, full of doubts, questions, and highs and lows.

Some observations: knowledge broadens perspectives; teamwork is much more powerful than individual work; interpersonal skills are more important than mental calculation ability; having a goal, and why not a dream, helps to provide direction and increases the chances of achieving it; physical health is closely linked to mental health; sports and studies are among the best ways to create healthy and lasting friendships; the Olympics change a life.



DID YOU KNOW...?

July 9, 1962 – Starfish Prime: A Landmark in Space Physics

On July 9, 1962, the high-altitude nuclear test known as **Starfish Prime** was conducted, becoming one of the most significant experiments in the study of space physics. The detonation, carried out approximately 400 kilometers above the Pacific Ocean, allowed scientists to observe for the first time how a nuclear explosion interacts with Earth's magnetic field.

The experiment generated a powerful electromagnetic pulse (EMP) and created an artificial radiation belt of charged particles surrounding the Earth. These effects provided valuable insights into the magnetosphere, space radiation, and the behavior of high-energy particles.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

July 9

• **Takumi Imai**
Japan – Student

• **Şenol Tarhan**
Türkiye – Student



WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

The words can be hidden horizontally, vertically, or diagonally.

PURE MODELING AND ABSTRACTION

CAUSTIC
OPTICS
GEOMETRIC
PARTICLES
ENERGIES
SYMMETRY
VECTORS
CONSERVATION
MATRICES
LAGRANGIANO
TRAJECTORY
DYNAMICS

U	O	G	M	Z	S	N	H	D	B	I	T	I	X
N	O	P	E	O	P	T	I	C	S	G	R	I	C
V	N	A	U	O	Z	I	N	G	Z	P	A	O	S
S	A	R	B	M	Y	Y	O	S	K	X	J	P	S
S	I	T	V	R	D	E	I	U	E	K	E	E	W
M	G	I	E	R	Y	I	T	B	E	X	C	N	J
M	N	C	C	C	N	B	A	R	Y	S	T	E	I
M	A	L	T	I	A	J	V	K	I	E	O	R	L
E	R	E	O	T	M	N	R	M	A	C	R	G	G
T	G	S	R	S	I	N	E	Z	Y	I	Y	I	D
R	A	X	S	U	C	N	S	D	R	O	E	U	U
Y	L	F	N	A	S	U	N	M	Z	T	A	S	Y
Y	J	N	Y	C	Q	O	O	Z	T	A	I	W	Y
U	U	J	B	Q	V	T	C	X	F	M	I	B	F

PHOTO GALLERY

Science and culture



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