

SAKURA SCIENCE EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

DAY 1

8th September 2023

Experience

We all assembled at Delhi Airport Terminal 3 at 6:00 pm. Everyone was pumped up with excitement and were waiting to complete processes to board the flight.

We said a final goodbye to our family and entered the check-in counter. It was a long process of security checks and other necessary requirements to board the flight.

We all were traveling internationally for the first time and for some of us it was the first time we were traveling in an aircraft. And as we were about to board got the information that our flight got delayed, probably because of G20.

And finally at 11:30 pm we were inside the aircraft that would take us to Japan, a beautiful country.

Although the Cathay Pacific plane had a lot of features, no one managed to take a good sleep. When we reached Hong-Kong it was heavily raining and we had to transfer to a different flight.

My experience in Hong-Kong was not good.

I do not know if it was a language issue or something else but apparently the people were talking to us very rudely. I remember one instant in which one of us handed the wrong document to the staff member and that person began to shout and talk rudely.

Thankfully we only had to transfer that would not take much time.

After the flight transfer we reached Japan by 5:15 pm.

Sakamoto Sensei and Sawada San were waiting for our welcome at the pick-up area.

They were holding the Tiranga, although I was tired, but when I saw that Indian flag in their hands, it filled me with enthusiasm.

They dropped us to our hotel by bus and Sakamoto Sensei helped us in the check-in.

We all were tired from the long journey, but we could not control ourselves to see the beautiful capital of Japan, so we went for a small walk. After that walk we had a good sleep.

Takeaway

Japan is filled with great people and the sweetest people I have ever met. With discipline, simplistic lifestyle and culture they make a wonderful country and do not hesitate to even hold the Indian flag, this describes their greatness.

"Give respect, Get respect"

Photos



DAY 2

9th September 2023

Experience

We started the day with enthusiasm. We were to be welcomed by the school that day. Mr Sawada came to pick us up and we walked to the school, which was preparing for the festival with enthusiastic fervor and responsibility. The school gave us a warm and kind welcome, and we introduced ourselves to the students in their assembly. Afterwards we went to see the exhibits of their school fair. Some students volunteered to help us navigate through the fair. We also experienced the Japanese tea ceremony which was heartwarming and relaxing. That evening we visited a special place, the Tokyo SkyTree. It had two floors, one on 350m and the other on 450m.

The SkyTree gave us a mesmerizing view of the city and we had a good time creating memories and exploring the tower, following that we went back to our hotel. We ended our day with some tasty ready to cook food (Japanese food was not to our liking)

Takeaway

1. The world will help you if you help it.
2. The hospitality and kindness of the Japanese people is something we should learn from and implement in our lives
3. Education for students should not be limited to books, hands-on activities and creative projects which intrigue the curiosity of the students should be promoted

Photos





DAY 3

10th September 2023

Experience

Our presentations at the Tokyo Metropolitan School of Science and Technology took up the majority of Day 3. As we entered the school premises, we were completely taken aback by the hustle on the school grounds. Despite being a Sunday the students were full of energy all prepared to have a long day of presentations, games and fun activities. (Due

to the School Science Festival the school operated on the weekend, and the students were given an off on Monday and Tuesday instead)

The presentations were held on the ground floor, our posters were exhibited on big boards, and we were given a specific location to display our model or research as and when visitors arrived. We were greeted by some school staff and then they led us to our designated spots where we spent the next 2 hours. Within these 2 hours many students, teachers and children from other schools including Indian International school of Japan came to view our presentations. During the presentations, some intriguing questions that helped us acquire more knowledge about our models and some encouraging comments that inspired us to further integrate our models with reasonable ideas were also stated.

Following our presentations, we were given the opportunity to participate in a number of entertaining activities, like playing table tennis with boxes, online games developed by school students and learning how to make keychains. There was also a special stall designated to Indian culture where Japanese students wore sarees and drew henna patterns, they were extremely talented at it, and made beautiful designs.

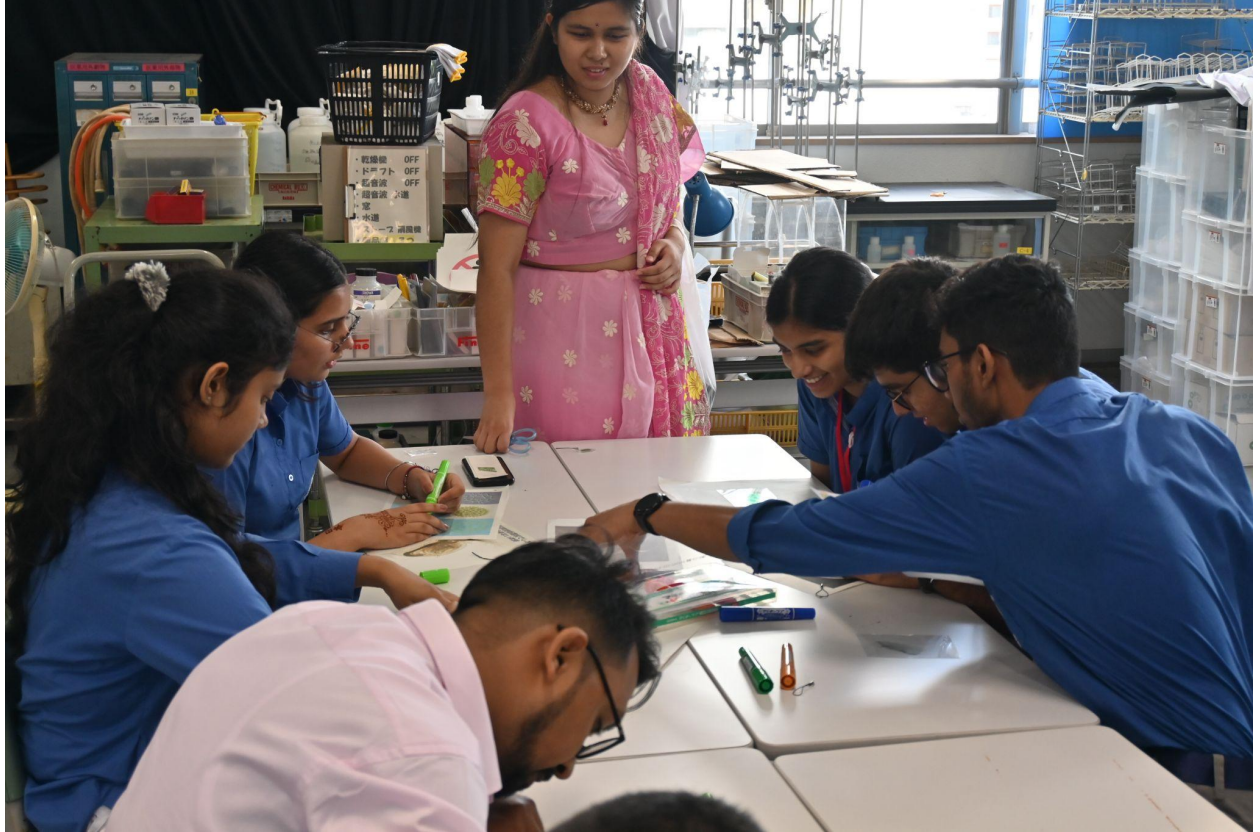
After a tiring yet a fun day at school, we headed out for a fantastic dinner at Curry Leaves Restaurant, one of the best places to get Indian food in Tokyo. The windy weather and the sparkling lights at night seemed captivating and lovely.

Takeaway

In my opinion, one of the hardest things about today was the interactions we had with various Japanese students, staff and visitors. The language barrier made it very difficult to communicate and comprehend each other's words yet it didn't stop us from appreciating each other's innovations and scientific models. All the students were friendly, polite and respectful which made us feel very comfortable.

Photos





DAY 4

11th September 2023

Experience

Today we started our day by going to the Tokyo Metropolitan High School of Science and Technology where the bus, which would take us to Tsukuba, was waiting. We were accompanied by Mrs. Sakamoto and Mr. Sawada along with six students from their school. After reaching Tsukuba we went to JAXA Tsukuba Space Centre. We saw some astonishing models of space rockets and satellites, we also saw space food and insides of space crafts. After admiring the models, we left for the University of Tsukuba.

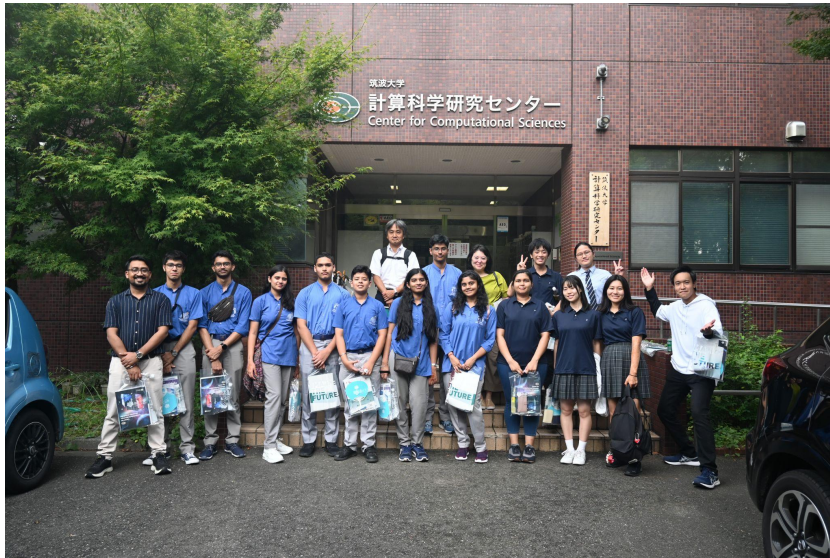
The University of Tsukuba was enormous and gorgeous. It had many departments related to different subjects, fountains, huge trees on sidewalks and vending machines. We were led by some university students for our workshops inside the university. We walked all our way to all the workshops.

Our first workshop was about Supercomputers. We were told about the uses of supercomputers, how it can be made more powerful and we also saw the supercomputers lab.

Our second workshop was about generating electricity using atomic fusion and plasma. We saw a presentation related to atomic fusion and saw various machines in which plasma was used to make electricity.

Around 4:45 pm we left the university and went to Tsukuba Yama Hotel Aokiya. The staff explained each detail briefly and politely then we were asked to go to our rooms. It was a traditional Japanese room with tatami floor mats on the floors, a wooden table in the center of the room, sliding doors for mattresses and a breath-taking view of the town through the glass windows. We spent the rest of the time in our rooms. Following Japanese culture, we went to the public bath with Japanese students at night which was on the terrace. It became a highlight of my trip as the beauty of the view cannot be described in words. It was a new and relaxing experience. We ended our day with dinner in a separate dining room which was booked for us and the Japanese students and teachers. Japanese food is something which Indians might not enjoy. I struggled to enjoy it even though I am a non vegetarian as its taste was bland and much different from the flavors of food we have in India. It was a bit tiring today but the new experiences and workshops filled me with enthusiasm to look forward to more events like these for the rest of the journey.

Photos



DAY 5

12th September 2023

Experience

After a delightful overnight experience in the Aokiya Hotel, we headed for Tokyo first thing in the morning via bus. Throughout the journey, all of us indulged in Japanese card games which were brought by the Japanese students we were traveling with.

After our arrival in Tokyo, we went straight to the Sotetsu Fresa Inn and enjoyed about an hour of rest, after which we all headed to the Sumida Aquarium. Over there we saw a vast variety of aquatic creatures, such as seals, pufferfish, penguins, a sand-tiger shark,

manta ray and many different types of jellyfish. At the aquarium we spent the majority of our time photographing and admiring the creatures presented there.

After we saw everything there was to see at the aquarium, we hastily bought some souvenirs and headed for an Indian restaurant for dinner.

The restaurant was called "Tara Kitchen" and there we all ate Indian cuisine.

After a hearty meal, we all headed back for the hotel, before which we went to see the Japanese students off. At the hotel, we prepared our gifts for the closing ceremony, after which all got some rest and recharged all our batteries (figuratively and literally) for another eventful day to come.

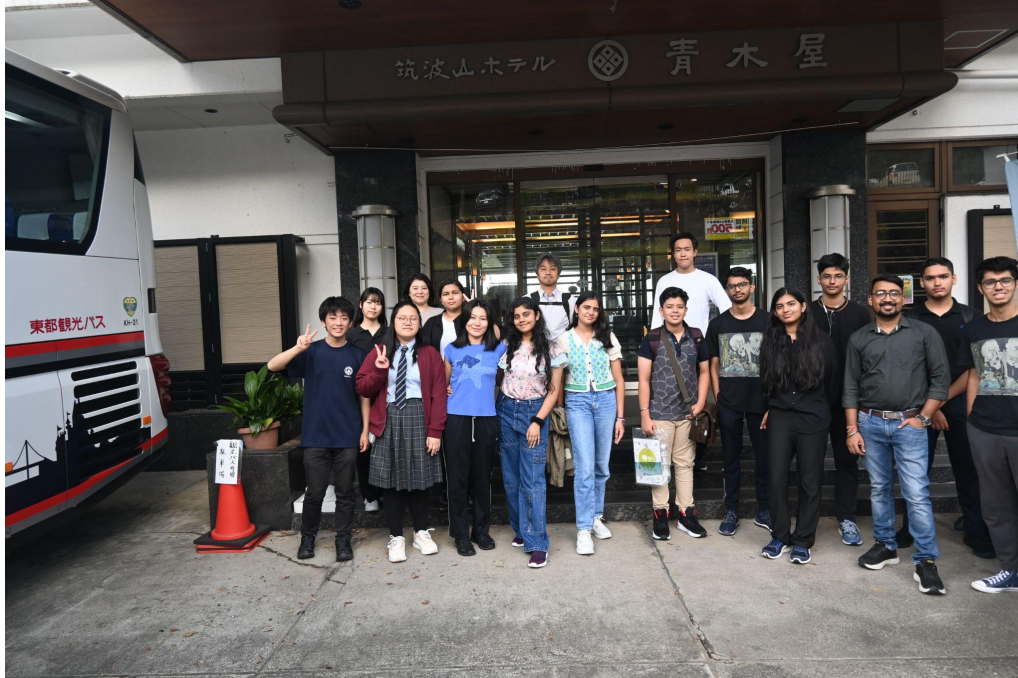
Takeaway

On this day we learnt about various sea creatures and learnt how to better navigate the vast and dense city of Tokyo.

We also learnt a bit more about how public transportation works and how it manages to be extremely efficient.

Also we understood the importance of living in harmony with animals.

Photos



DAY 6
13th September 2023

Experience

Reached school at around 9 for the closing ceremony. The school had prepared gifts for us not knowing we had done the same for them,

Siya gave a closing speech thanking the school for their hospitality and support throughout the trip, Reyansh presented a classical Indian song.

The politeness and respectful nature of the Japanese people was shown when they took our consent before doing anything with something that involved us, like posting a picture with us on their school website.

◦ Akihabara:

Explored some shops, mostly window shopping initially.

Went to an Indian restaurant “roti time”

It had been a long wait, so we engaged in small talk and verbal games with Japanese students.

Our first stop after lunch was “animate”, a twin tower 6 floor combination of everything to do with anime and/or popular Japanese games, unfortunately due to timing schedules, we could only visit it for an hour.

After that we went to Asakusa using the metro, there we were able to find a lot of souvenirs and other traditional Japanese gifts and clothing.

We returned home via bus by around 7 pm, after a while at around 8:30 we visited a store near our hotel called Daiso, the Japanese dollar store equivalent.

We used this to use up any change we had left and to purchase some items that we forgot to buy from Asakusa or Akihabara.

Takeaway

Being proud of one’s country’s culture gives a special sense of satisfaction that is rarely ever replicable,

Whilst India’s diversity makes a collective cultural union difficult, efforts should be made to give each one of them equal importance so we as citizens can learn to be proud of them.

Photos

