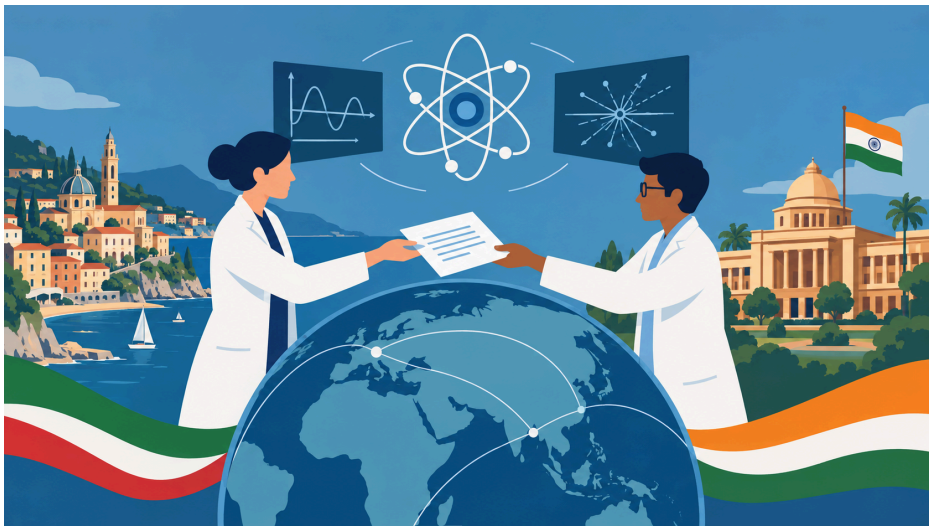
India-ICTP Co-operation Fund: India and ICTP Institutionalise Scientific Partnership (PIB)



Original symbolic graphic: pcsmantra.com

Why in News

India and the Italy-based **International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP, Trieste)** have launched the **"India-ICTP Co-operation Fund"**, giving decades of scientific partnership an **institutional form**. A **Letter of Intent (LoI) between the DST and ICTP** was signed during Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology and Earth Sciences **Dr Jitendra Singh's** visit to ICTP (part of his 11-15 November 2026 Italy tour); the LoI was exchanged on the Indian side by **Dr Praveenkumar Somasundaram**, Head of International Cooperation at DST (PIB, 15 November 2026).

What the Fund Will Do

- **Purpose:** to provide a structured framework for the engagement and **mobility of Indian researchers**, scientists and students with ICTP - making the existing association more impactful.
- **Scope:** expanded visiting fellowships, diploma programmes and postdoctoral opportunities; joint research, workshops and capacity-building.
- **Institutional weight:** Dr Jitendra Singh said the Fund would give "greater impact" to the existing engagement and benefit Indian researchers.

ICTP and the India Connection

- **What ICTP is:** a leading global hub for advanced research, higher education and capacity-building in physics, mathematics and related fields (Trieste, Italy).
- **Indian participation:** the DST, CSIR, leading universities and IITs have collaborated with ICTP through joint research, workshops and exchanges; Indian researchers regularly benefit from ICTP's visiting fellowships, diploma programmes and postdoctoral opportunities, while ICTP experts engage with India's communities in **high-energy physics, astrophysics, climate modelling and computational science**.
- **The visit's canvas:** the same tour covered the **Elettra 2.0** co-partnership at Elettra Sincrotrone (7 million euros+, a separate announcement) and the **Second India-Italy Science and Innovation Dialogue** (a new joint research call for 2027: AI, HPC, clean energy, advanced biotech) - a follow-up to the **Special Strategic Partnership** decided during PM Modi's Italy visit in May 2026.

Why It Matters

- **GS-III S&T:** India's standing in basic science - access to world-class centres is the key to talent building.
- **GS-II International:** the science dimension of the India-Italy Strategic Partnership (elevated 2023; JSAP 2025-29) - a durable "soft" pillar of diplomacy.
- **From personal to institutional:** the shift from individual linkages to an institutional fund - a sustainable cooperation model.

Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. The ICTP (International Centre for Theoretical Physics) is located in:

(a) Geneva

(b) Trieste, Italy

(c) Paris

(d) Vienna

Answer and Explanation

Answer: (b) Trieste, Italy - a global centre for advanced research in physics and mathematics; India's association with it spans decades.

Q2. The LoI for the India-ICTP Co-operation Fund was signed between:

(a) CSIR and ICTP

(b) DST and ICTP

(c) UGC and ICTP

(d) INSA and ICTP

Answer and Explanation

Answer: (b) Between the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and ICTP; Dr Praveenkumar Somasundaram, Head (International Cooperation), DST, exchanged the LoI from the Indian side.

Mains Practice Question

Q: "International collaboration in basic science is a multiplier for national talent-building." Analyse this statement in the context of the India-ICTP Co-operation Fund. (250 words)

Outline: Introduction - the Fund and the LoI; dimensions - mobility, fellowships, joint research; the gains of institutionalisation - continuity, assessment, expansion; the India-Italy frame - JSAP, the science dialogue, Elettra; limits - funding, brain drain vs brain circulation; conclusion - investment in basic science is long-term national power.

FAQ

Short answer: India and ICTP (Trieste) have launched the India-ICTP Co-operation Fund; a DST-ICTP LoI was signed during Dr Jitendra Singh's Italy visit (11-15 November 2026). The goal: an institutional framework for the mobility, fellowships and joint research of Indian researchers.

Q: What is the India-ICTP Co-operation Fund?

A fund institutionalising the decades-old India-ICTP partnership - a structured expansion of researcher mobility, visiting fellowships, diplomas and postdoctoral opportunities; the DST-ICTP LoI was signed on 15 November 2026.

Q: What has India's engagement with ICTP looked like?

The DST, CSIR, IITs and leading universities collaborate through joint research and workshops; Indian researchers regularly use ICTP's fellowships and diploma programmes - in high-energy physics, astrophysics, climate modelling and computational science.

Q: What else was announced on this visit?

Dr Jitendra Singh's Italy tour (11-15 November) also covered the Elettra 2.0 synchrotron co-partnership (7 million euros+) and the Second India-Italy Science and Innovation Dialogue - with a 2027 joint research call proposed on AI, HPC, clean energy and biotech.

Sources

- PIB (15 November 2026, official): India-ICTP Co-operation Fund - institutional collaboration and researcher mobility
- PIB (13 November 2026, official): India-Italy scientific cooperation - new joint research call for 2027
- Related post (pcsmantra): India-Italy Elettra 2.0 synchrotron co-partnership (15 November)