



## Dr. Jitendra Singh Calls for Professionalising Municipal Governance through Research, Capacity Building and Financial Reforms; IIPA and ICAI Sign MoU

Technology, evidence-based governance and professional financial management will shape the next generation of Urban Local Bodies: Dr. Jitendra Singh

Dr. Jitendra Singh Backs Institutional Partnership to Modernise Municipal Accounting and Financial Governance

IIPA–ICAI MoU Opens New Chapter in Municipal Capacity Building and Financial Management Reforms

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Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Minister of State for the Prime Minister's Office, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh today said that India's next generation governance reforms must be driven by evidence-based decision making, professional capacity building and robust financial management at the grassroots. Stressing that municipal accounting is no longer merely a financial function but the foundation of

transparent, technology-driven and citizen-centric urban governance, he said strong institutions, backed by research and professional expertise, are essential for creating efficient Urban Local Bodies capable of meeting the aspirations of a rapidly urbanising nation.

The Minister was addressing the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signing ceremony between the Centre for Urban Studies (CUS), Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), and the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) for Capacity Building of Municipalities and Strengthening Municipal Accounting and Financial Management Practices. The collaboration seeks to combine IIPA's expertise in governance, research and public administration with ICAI's professional strengths in accounting, auditing and public financial management to support institutional reforms across municipalities.

Describing the partnership as a significant milestone in strengthening local governance, Dr. Jitendra Singh said both institutions have evolved over decades into nationally respected centres of excellence and their coming together represents a natural convergence of knowledge, governance and professional competence. He said while IIPA has expanded far beyond its traditional role of training civil servants to serve elected representatives, judicial officers, defence personnel, the private sector and other stakeholders, ICAI has emerged as one of the world's largest professional accounting bodies with unmatched expertise in financial management. Bringing these complementary strengths together, he said, would create a strong institutional platform for improving governance at the municipal level.

Dr. Jitendra Singh said governance today is increasingly shaped by technology, reliable data and professional systems, making municipal accounting reforms more relevant than ever before. He expressed confidence that the collaboration would not remain confined to the activities listed in the MoU but would continuously evolve as both institutions identify new opportunities to improve urban governance through research, innovation and institutional learning. He also noted that the extensive nationwide networks of IIPA and ICAI would enable the benefits of this partnership to reach municipalities across the country through sustained capacity-building initiatives.

The MoU establishes a comprehensive framework for collaboration in research and knowledge development, capacity building, training, advisory services and technical support to strengthen municipal accounting systems and financial management practices. The two institutions will jointly undertake policy research, surveys, documentation and preparation of knowledge products; organise training programmes,

workshops, seminars, conferences and webinars for municipal officials; develop learning resources; and facilitate the exchange of professional expertise and best practices to improve financial accountability and governance in Urban Local Bodies. The agreement will remain in force for an initial period of three years.

Among those present on the occasion were Dr. Surendrakumar Bagde, IAS, Director General, IIPA; CA. Prasanna Kumar D., President, ICAI; CA. Hans Raj Chugh, Chairman, Public & Government Financial Management Committee (PGFMC), ICAI; Prof. V. N. Alok, Coordinator, Centre for Urban Studies; senior faculty members of IIPA; and office bearers of ICAI.

The collaboration builds upon the successful National Conference on the 16th Finance Commission and Local Public Finance, jointly organised by IIPA and ICAI earlier this year, which brought together representatives of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, Reserve Bank of India, NITI Aayog, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, National Institute of Urban Affairs, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy and municipal bodies to deliberate on reforms in local public finance. The deliberations reinforced the need for strengthening municipal accounting systems and laid the foundation for the present partnership.

Established in 1966, the Centre for Urban Studies at IIPA has played an important role in research, policy analysis and capacity building in urban governance and currently works across six States and three Union Territories with the support of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. The Centre has already initiated discussions with the Government of Haryana to support accounting reforms across all 87 Urban Local Bodies in the State, with the experience expected to serve as a model for similar initiatives elsewhere in the country.

During the programme, representatives of both institutions emphasised that sustainable improvements in urban governance require continuous investment in professional capacity, technical expertise and institutional learning. They said the partnership would facilitate joint research, development of practical toolkits and training modules, technical advisory support and structured knowledge exchange while promoting a Training of Trainers approach to create a multiplier effect across States. They also expressed confidence that the collaboration would complement the ongoing revision of the National Municipal Accounting Manual (NMAM) by integrating practical field experience with modern accounting standards and technology-enabled financial systems.

Dr. Jitendra Singh expressed confidence that the partnership would open a new chapter in institutional collaboration for municipal governance and public financial management. He said the initiative reflects the Government's continuing commitment to strengthening governance through knowledge, innovation and professional excellence, while equipping Urban Local Bodies with modern financial systems, enhanced institutional capacity and globally comparable accounting practices that ultimately translate into better public service delivery and improved quality of life for citizens.



**PHOTO:** Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh speaking during the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Centre for Urban Studies (CUS) and Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) at Kartavya Bhawan-3, New Delhi on Monday.







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