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PU to be in neutrino hunt

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CHANDIGARH: They are omnipresent, but detecting them is very difficult. These God-like qualities make the particle called neutrino a great subject of scientific curiosity.

Now, to study these particles, Panjab Universitys department of physics has been granted a project by the government of Indias department of atomic energy. The PU departments expertise has been sought in developing an India-based neutrino observatory (INO).

The university has been sanctioned of grant to the tune to Rs 2.5 crore to carry out the project.

Physics professor at PU JB Singh told TOI, Our job would be to make detectors required to study these particles.

The university has got five years to make the detectors.

We will set up a special laboratory where the detectors would be manufactured, tested and later on transported to INO, added Singh.

Proposed to be set up at a cost of Rs 920 crore during the 11th and 12th five-year plans, the INO was conceived on a scale larger than any other science project in India. Neutrinos are the most numerous particles in the universe and are studied for their implications in allied fields such as particle physics, cosmology and the origin of the universe among others.

The observatory needs 12,000 detectors and PU would be making these in hundreds. More than 50 scientists from about 15 institutes and universities including Delhi University, HPU have come together to promote the INO.

Recently, Atomic Energy Commission chairman Anil Kakodkar called on Tamil Nadu chief minister M Karunanidhi to finalize the setting up of the India-based Neutrino Observatory (INO) beneath the ground in the Nilgiris.