

**Remarks made at the ICTP Prize Ceremony  
March 31, 2008**

The ICTP Prize is awarded to outstanding scientists who are working in developing countries and are younger than 40 years of age. The goal of the prize is to recognize excellence and to provide some additional visibility and encouragement to the candidates. Our belief is that outstanding scientists are very important for the scientific values they uphold, and so deserve our support. Indeed, if one looks at the list of the ICTP Prize winners, it is clear that the purpose has been served very well. Nearly every ICTP Prize winner has been successful. The list can be found on the Center's website and is also engraved on plaques near my office.

The 2007 ICTP Prize Winner is Professor Mohammad Mehdi Sheikh Jabbari, from the School of Physics at the **Institute for Studies in Theoretical Physics and Mathematics**, or IPM as it is known, in Tehran, Iran. He is only 34, so we could have waited in principle for a few more years before awarding him this Prize, but his case is so strong that our selection committee enthusiastically favored acting on it immediately. I am very pleased that it happened this way, and offer my congratulations to Professor Sheikh-Jabbari.

Let me say a bit about the institution from which Professor Sheikh-Jabbari comes. As its name suggests, the institute started with emphasis on physics and mathematics, but currently it consists of eight schools: Mathematics, Physics, Cognitive Sciences, Computer Science, Nano-Science, Analytic Philosophy, Astronomy, and Particles and Accelerators. In addition to its research activities, IPM has also launched several educational PhD programs in Mathematical Logic, Plasma Physics, Cognitive Sciences, Nano-Science, and Analytic Philosophy. Consistent with this evolution, the Institute has recently changed its name to "Institute for Research in Fundamental Sciences" but has kept its acronym, IPM. In this regard, IPM is ahead of ICTP, which still clings to its historical name.

Professor Sheikh-Jabbari received his Ph.D. in 1998 from Sheriff University in Iran, and became a post-doc at IPM soon after. He stayed there for a year and a half. He then spent 2 years at ICTP as a post-doc before moving to Stanford University, also as a post-doc in the Stanford Institute of Theoretical Physics. After three years at Stanford, he went back to IPM, where he became a faculty member in 2004 in its School of Physics. For a year or so now, he has been the head of the School of Physics. The School consists of about 40 faculty members, half of whom are full-time and the other half are from other universities with an affiliate status.

Professor Sheik-Jabbari's research interests are High Energy Physics, Particle Physics & Quantum Gravity and String Theory.

The 2007 ICTP Prize is named after the great Soviet physicist L.D. Landau. Landau's work is unique for its breadth and depth of understanding. He made fundamental contributions to quantum mechanics and quantum electrodynamics, theories of superfluidity and superconductivity, the theory of second order phase transitions, plasma physics, fluid dynamics and combustion, among others. He was also instrumental in building a well-known school in theoretical physics. Landau was a member of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R, a recipient of the Lenin Science, a Foreign Member of the Royal Society of London, of the Danish Royal Academy of Sciences, of the Netherlands Royal Academy of Sciences, Foreign Associate of the US National Academy of Sciences, Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and of the Physical Society of London, and of the Physical Society of France. He received the Max Planck Medal, the Fritz London Prize and the 1962 Nobel Prize in Physics for the development of a mathematical theory of superfluidity of helium II.

The year 2008 is the centenary of his birth. Near my office, we have set up a brief exhibit on various materials concerning Landau, and the library has a special exhibit about his books and work. Some of you may wish to peruse them in your spare time.

By awarding the Prize in the name of Landau, it is our hope that it will inspire Professor Sheik-Jabbari to build a strong group of theoretical physics in Iran. Our support for that endeavor will doubtless continue.

Before awarding the Prize, I should mention the Prize Committee members and thank them for their diligent work. They are:

Paolo Creminelli  
Lothar Göttsche  
Fred Kucharski  
Matteo Marsili (Chairman)

**Citation of the Prize is:**

The 2007 ICTP Prize is awarded to M.M. Sheikh-Jabbari for his important contributions to non-commutative field theories in the context of D-branes and superstring theories, leading to interesting formal and phenomenological developments in theoretical and mathematical physics.

**Award the prize**

Professor Sheikh-Jabbari will now give his talk on "Noncommutative Spaces from Strings and Branes". He will keep his talk both brief and at the level of general physics audience, and briefly review the history of noncommutative space-times and recent developments of physics on noncommutative spaces. He will give a more formal seminar later in the High Energy Section.