



18<sup>th</sup> October 2010

**PRESS NOTE**

Ministry of Environment & Forests has accorded both environment and forest clearance for the proposal of the Department of Atomic Energy to set up a neutrino observatory in the Bodi West Hills Reserved Forest in Theni district of Tamil Nadu. The approval is subject to the conditions that there will be no cutting of trees and damage to forest cover, that measures will be taken to minimise the effect of tunnelling and to dispose rock debris and that the environmental management plan prepared by the Coimbatore-based Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History (SACON) will be fully implemented.

The neutrino observatory project is significant for India's scientific leadership. It is executed by the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) and 20 other scientific institutions in the country are part of the consortium. It will be a world-class laboratory for underground science, primarily neutrino physics. It will give India an edge for research relating to understanding fundamental laws of nature. This is not just a project in theoretical physics. It will also involve development of instrumentation and large-scale experiments. When completed by 2015 at an estimated cost of around Rs.1000 crore, it will house the world's most massive magnet. Over 200 scientists would participate in this facility.

MoE&F is pleased that the Department of Atomic Energy took into account its ecological concerns on an earlier proposed site at Singara and the site was changed to the Bodi West Hills.

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