

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ATOMIC ENERGY
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1458
ANSWERED ON:04.03.2015
NEUTRINO OBSERVATORY
Mullappally Shri Ramachandran;Roy Prof. Saugata

Will the Minister of ATOMIC ENERGY be pleased to state:

- (a) the present status of the India based Neutrino Observatory Project being set up in Theni, Tamil Nadu;
- (b) the expected time of completion of the project and the details of funds allocated and utilised for the same;
- (c) whether the environmental impact of the project has been taken into account and the Government is aware of the public agitation against the project; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the steps proposed to be taken in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES & PENSIONS AND PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (Dr. JITENDRA SINGH) :

(a) The Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), with the approval of Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) sanctioned an amount of `83.45 crore in 2014 for pre-project activities of the India-based Neutrino Observatory (INO) Project. The financial sanction for the full project has been issued on 06/01/2015 at an estimated cost of `1583.05 crore (which includes the sanctioned cost of pre-project activities). The R&D phase of the project has been completed. Infrastructure development activities have been taken up and fencing of the land provided by Tamil Nadu Government and laying water pipeline to bring water from a river over a distance of 15 km have been completed.

(b) The scheduled date of completion of the project is 31/12/2019. The total cost of the project is `1583.05 crore out of which `550 crore has been allocated in the 12th five year plan. An amount of `32 crore has been spent so far on this project.

(c)&(d) Yes, Sir. Environmental impact of the project has been taken into account before sanction of the project. Detailed studies on the environmental impact were carried out by Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History, Coimbatore, an autonomous institute under Ministry of Environment and Forests and geotechnical studies were carried out by the Geological Survey of India (GSI).

A Writ Petition has been filed by Shri V. Gopalaswamy, former Member of Parliament, in the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court against this project and the matter is yet to be heard by the Court.

The scientists involved in the project have taken up science outreach activities in the local educational institutes and are also involved in public outreach programmes to explain the true nature of the project and its benefits for the science students. The Department of Atomic Energy has issued a press release to allay apprehension about the project.