

India-Based Neutrino Observatory (INO)

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PRESS RELEASE

Sub: Misreporting on Media of INO lab as a nuclear waste facility

Scientists and engineers of the India-based Neutrino Observatory project strongly condemn the recent media mis-information campaign and vilification in reports that have appeared in some Tamil and Malayalam press and TV news, stating that the INO lab and tunnel will house nuclear waste. We strongly reject any such suggestions and reiterate that INO will be used for no purpose other than basic science research, in particular, neutrino studies.

We are dismayed by attempts by certain section of the media and prominent political personalities to continually mislead the public. Such rumour-mongering is at best poor reporting, and at worst deliberate and malicious. It is reprehensible that so many agencies reported this news without first cross-checking the facts against either the MOEF or the scientists themselves.

The facts of the matter: INO proponents applied for environmental clearance with the State Environmental Impact Assessment (S-EIA) Authority on 12 April, 2010, to set up an underground laboratory for basic sciences at Pottipuram, Theni. The application clearly outlines the purpose of the laboratory and NO connection whatsoever is made with nuclear power and allied activities including nuclear waste disposal.

On 22 September 2010, the S-EIA transferred the application to the Government of India due to the special nature of the project. In the meantime the Tamil Nadu state government also informed the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MOEF), Government of India, that they will have no objection to setting up the INO laboratory in Theni District.

Subsequently MOEF cleared the project on 1 June 2011, and the relevant document is available on the INO web-site: <http://www.ino.tifr.res.in/ino/moefcl.php> . A perusal of this document (and in fact all the documents submitted to S-EIA and MOEF which should be available from them on request) should remove any doubt or on the nature of the project.

In view of the above, we request the media to issue correction as appropriate and in fact support the scientists in making this ambitious science project, which will be a boon for students and the research community, a great success.

Issued in the public interest by
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