



INDIAN INSTITUTE OF ASTROPHYSICS

BANGALORE - 560034

Bicentennial year 1986

Professor Ramanath Cowsik
Director

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Shri. R. K. Upadhyay, I.F.S.,
District Forest Officer
Tirupattur Division
Tirupattur - 635601
N.A.A. Dist.

February 27, 1997

Dear Shri. Upadhyay,

Sub. Forest Land
Ref. Your letter No. 9097/05 dated 20.02.1997

I refer to your above referred letter and the discussion Dr. K.K.Ghosh, Resident Scientist, Vainu Bappu Observatory, Kavalur had with you. Based on the information provided, I enclose herein the necessary application form duly filled in.

I wish to inform you that ours is a purely academic research institution carrying out research in Astronomy and Astrophysics at the Vainu Bappu Observatory. As you are aware we have installed 2.34 M Optical Telescope, of international standard with all updated facilities, costing currently about P.s. 25 crores, the biggest in the South Asia, apart from other telescopes and buildings costing about Rs. 15 Crores. This 2.34 M Telescope was inaugurated by the then Prime Minister of India, (late) Shri. Rajiv Gandhi on January 06 1986. Apart from this, we have many other telescopes of varying sizes from 15-inch to 40-inch installed at the Vainu Bappu Observatory, Kavalur, Alangayam and they are being used extensively for the research work. Various collaborative programmes with various scientific research institutions in India and abroad, are being carried out at this site. Initially, in the year 1965, we have been allotted on lease, 40 acres of land, in the inner Jawadhu hills, by the Forest Department. Subsequently in the year 1976 (vide G.O. Ms. No. 676, Forests & Fisheries, dt. 21.5.1980), we have been allotted on lease, another 60 acres of land adjoining the existing 40 acres. The lease for the entire land is being renewed regularly. Moreover, the Indian Institute of Astrophysics do not own any other land, at a suitable place, for this purpose. This is a premier scientific institution funded by the Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of India. The location, Kavalur, in Alangam, Vaniyambadi Tq, has been chosen based on a site survey conducted throughout southern part of the country, for installation of telescopes. As the nature of work is

purely of academic interest, there is no hazard to flora and fauna of this place. Only necessary trees were cleared, with the permission of the Forest Department, way back in 1965, wherever buildings have come up and almost double the quantity ornamental trees were planted to beautify the place and to maintain the cool temperature needed for the efficient functioning of the telescopes and other instruments. Under no circumstances the provisions of Forest Conservation Act 1980 has been violated.

Under these circumstances, I request you take necessary action to assign the said 100 acres of land to the Indian Institute of Astrophysics, to continue research activities at the Vainu Bappu Observatory of International importance.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

R. Cowsik

Ramanath Cowsik

(vi)

FORM

**Form for seeking prior approval under Section 2 of the proposal by the State Government
other authorities (See Rule)**

1. Project Details

i) Short narrative of the proposal and project/scheme for which the forest land is required : For Astrophysical Research work and to house the Asia's Largest Telescope, and other telescopes for Vainu Bappu: Observatory, Indian Institute of Astrophysics, Min. of Science & Technology, Govt. of India.

ii) Map showing the required forest area boundary of adjoining forest and itemwise breakup of the required forest area for different purposes (to be authenticated by an Officer not below the rank of Deputy Conservator of Forests) : Enclosed

iii) Total cost of the Project : Rs. 40 Crores (approx)

iv) Justification for locating the project in the forest area, giving alternatives examined and reasons for their rejection : This place was selected, after a thorough site survey of S. India, for its excellent seeing condition, pollution free atmosphere, maximum clear sky, etc.

v) Financial and Social Benefits : This is research in fundamental science and the benefits of enormous value are of indirect nature.

vi) Total Population benefited : General Public, School & College students, Universities and Institutions with regard to the popularization of Astronomy & Astrophysics. Many students have been enrolled for the Ph.D. degree. Project work for the students of various educational institutions.

vii) Employment generated : Direct Employment - 98 (stationed at Kavalur)
Indirect Employment - 60

2. Location of the Project / Scheme

i) State / Union Territory : Tamilnadu

ii) District : North Arcot Ambedkar Dist.

iii) Forest Division, Forest Block
Compartment etc. : Tirupattur Division
Inner Javadhu Hills, Alangayam

3. Itemwise break-up of the total land required for the Project / Scheme alongwith its existing land use.

- 4.0 Acres for Fireline
- 2.0 Acres for Road
- 15.0 Acres for Telescope and other buildings
- 10.0 Acres for Garden & Lawn
- 69.0 Acres to maintain dustfree atmosphere for reducing heating effect to the telescopes and instruments, and for future projects.

4. Details of forest land involved

- i) Legal status of the forest (namely, reserve, protected / unclassified etc.) : Reserve Forest
- ii) Details of flora and fauna existed in the area :
- iii) Density of vegetation :
- iv) Species-wise and diameter class-wise abstract of trees :
- v) Vulnerability of the forest area to erosion, whether it forms a part of a seriously eroded area or not : No
- vi) Whether it forms a part of national park, wildlife, sanctuary, nature reserves, biosphere reserve etc., and if so, details of the area involved (specific comments of the chief wildlife warden to be annexed) : No
- vii) Item-wise break-up of the forest land required for the project / scheme for different purposes : Refer Sl. No. 3
- viii) Rare/endangered species of flora and fauna found in the area : None
- ix) Whether it is habitate for migrating fauna or forms of breeding ground for them : No
- x) Any other significance of the area relevant to the proposal : Excellent location to carry out research in Astronomy & Astrophysics

5. Details of displacement of people due to the project :

- i) Total number of families involved in displacement : Nil
- ii) Number of Scheduled Castes/Tribes families involved in displacement : Nil
- iii) Detailed rehabilitation plan : Does not arise

6. Details of compensatory afforestation scheme :

- i) Details of non-forest area / degraded forest area identified for compensatory afforestation, its distance from adjoining forests, number of patches, size of each patch : Does not apply
- ii) Map showing non-forest/degraded forest area identified for compensatory afforestation and adjoining forest boundaries : ----
- iii) Detailed compensatory afforestation scheme including species to be planted, implementing agency, time schedule, cost structure etc. : ----
- iv) Total financial outlay for compensatory afforestation scheme : ----
- v) Certificates from competent authority regarding suitability of area identified for compensatory afforestation and from management point of view (to be signed by an officer not below the rank of Deputy Conservatory of Forests) : ----
- vi) Certificate from the Chief Secretary regarding non-availability of non-forest land for compensatory afforestation (if applicable) : ----

7. Details regarding Transmission Lines (only for Transmission line proposals) :

- i) Total length of the transmission line : Does not apply:
- ii) Length passing through forest area : -do-
- iii) Right of way : -do-
- iv) Number of Towers to be erected : -do-
- v) Number of Towers to be erected in forest area : -do-
- vi) Height of transmission towers : -do-

8. Details of Irrigation / Hydel Projects (only for Irrigation/ Hydel Projects) :

- i) Total Catchment Area : Does not apply
- ii) Total Command Area : -do-
- iii) Full reservoir level : -do-
- iv) High flood level : -do-
- v) Minimum drawal level : -do-
- vi) Break-up of area falling in catchment area of the project (forest land, cultivated land, pasture land human cultivated land and others) : -do-
- vii) Area of Submergence at high flood Level : -do-
- viii) Area of Submergence at full reservoir level : -do-
- ix) Area of Submergence 2-meter below full reservoir level : -do-
- x) Area of submergence 1 meter below full reservoir level : -do-

- xi) Area of submergence of minimum drawal level : Does not apply
- xii) Detailed catchment treatment plan : -do-
- xiii) Total financial outlays and details regarding availability of funds for catchment area / treatment area : -do-

9) Details regarding Road/Railway lines (only for Roads/Railway line Proposals) :

- i) Length and Width of the strip required and forest area required : Does not apply
- ii) Total length of the road : -do-
- iii) Length of the road already constructed : -do-
- iv) Length of the road passing through the forest : -do-

10) Details regarding Mining Proposals (only for mining proposals) :

- i) Total mining lease area and forest area required : Does not apply
- ii) Period of mining lease proposed : -do-
- iii) Estimated reserve of the mineral / ore in the forest area and in the non-forest area : -do-
- iv) Annual estimated production of mineral / ore : -do-
- v) Nature of mining operations (opencast / underground) : -do-
- vi) Phased reclamation plan : -do-
- vii) Gradient of the area where mining would be undertaken : -do-

- viii) Copy of the Lease land (to be attached only for renewal purpose) : -do-
- ix) Number of labourers to be employed : -do-
- x) Area of forest land required for : Does not arise
- a) Mining : -do-
- b) Storing mineral / ore : -do-
- c) Dumping of overburden : -do-
- d) Storing tools and machinery : -do-
- e) Construction of building, power stations, workshop etc : -do-
- f) Township-housing if any : -do-
- g) Construction of temporary railway lines : -do-
- h) Full land used planned forest area required : -do-
- xi) Reasons why the above activities referred to in (a) to (h) above under the project for which forest land /has been asked for cannot be undertaken/ located outside the forest area : -do-
- xii) The extent of damage likely to be caused and the number of trees affected on account of mining and related activities : -do-
- xiii) Distance of mining area from pesonal water sources national and state highway, national parks, sanctuaries and higher reserves : -do-
- xiv) Procedure for stating of the topsoil for reuse : -do-

- xv) Extent of subsidence expected in underground mining operations and its impact on water, forest and other vegetation : Does not arise
11. Cost benefit analysis : Cost-wise it cannot be estimated
12. Whether clearance from environments angle is required : NO
- If yes, whether requisite details for the same have been furnished : Doesn't apply
13. Whether any work in violation of the act has been carried out : NO
- If yes,
- i) Details of the same including date of commencement : -----
- ii) Officers responsible for violation of the act : -----
- iii) Action taken / being taken against erring officers : -----
- iv) Whether work in violation of the act, is still in progress : -----
14. Any other information :
15. Details of certificates/ documents enclosed :
- 1) Area Map
 - 2) Location Map of Telescopes & Laboratories
 - 3) Write up on usage of VBT - 'A Decade with the VBT 1986-1996'

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14. Any other information

15. Details of certificates/ documents enclosed

- 1) Area Map
- 2) Location Map of Telescopes & Laboratories
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'A Decade with the VBT 1986-1996'

16. Detailed opinion of the Chief Conservator of Forests / Head of the Forest Department concerned covering the following aspects, namely :

- i) Out-turn of timber, fuelwood and other forest produce from the forest land involved :
- ii) Whether the Dist. is self-sufficient in timber and fuelwood :
- iii) The effect of proposal on
 - a) Fuelwood supply to rural population :
 - b) Economy and livelihood of the tribal and backward communities :
- iv) Specific recommendations of the Chief Conservator of Forests / Head of the Forest Department for acceptance or otherwise of the proposal with reason thereof :

Certified that the other alternatives for the purpose have been explored and the demand for the required area is the minimum for the forest land.

Director *R. Cowsh*
Indian Institute of Astrophysics
(Dept. of Science & Technology -
Govt. of India)

Signature of the Authorised Officer
of the State Government / Authority.

Prof. R. Cowsh
Director
Indian Institute of Astrophysics
Bangalore-560 034

