The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has granted environment clearance and Coastal Regulatory Zone clearance for setting up Missile Testing Launch Facility on the Bay of Bengal coast and Technical Facility at Gullalamoda village in Krishna district.

With this, all necessary clearances to commence the construction work have been obtained by the Defence Research and Development Organisation.

The Hindu has got access to a copy of the EC and CRZ clearance that was communicated by the MoEFCC to K. Radhakrishna, Chief Construction Engineer (R&D)-S, Defence Research and Development Organisation, Secunderabad, on July 3.

The EC and CRZ clearance document says: “There is confirmation from Secretary, Ministry of Defence that this project is a strategic requirement and national importance and cannot be located anywhere else. It is thus exempted from the public hearing as per EIA notification 2016.”

The Environmental Appraisal Committee (EAC - Nuclear and Defence) of the MoEFCC has appraised the DRDO’s EC and CRZ applications of the project during its 34th meeting held in August 2018. On the basis of the EAC, the MoEFCC has accorded the Environmental Clearance and CRZ clearance under the provisions of the EIA notification 2006 and CRZ notification 2011 and amendments respective, permitting the ₹1,000 crore defence project on the East Coast of India.

Technical studies
IIT-Madras and WAPCOS have done the key technical studies required for the project. The MoEFCC has also put 11 conditions, including preparation of Oil contingency management plan and disaster management plan, before the commencement of the construction of the project.

The DRDO has proposed to set up the project on 154.4 hectares in the Krishna Wildlife Sanctuary in Krishna district.

The technical facility will be developed on 130.15 hectares, while the test facility will come up on the 6.07 hectares, according to the project design.