

## Govt. to allot 1.53 acres of land for Kalam memorial expansion

By Ramanathapuram

*DRDO plans a planetarium, knowledge centre and a library near the memorial*

The Tamil Nadu government has decided to hand over an additional 1.53 acres of land, adjacent to the memorial of former President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, to Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) for its further expansion.

The government, which initially made available 1.36 acres of land at Pei Karumbu near Rameswaram, where the mortal remains of Kalam were laid to rest, had allotted an additional 2.09 acres in the same place for building a memorial.

The DRDO, which took up the task of building the memorial as a tribute to the late leader for his contribution to the organisation, has built an imposing memorial on 2.11 acres of land, and it is set for inauguration on July 27, the second death anniversary of the former President.

Following a demand for more space to set up a planetarium, knowledge centre and a permanent library near the memorial, the State government had now decided to hand over an additional 1.53 acres of land to the right of the memorial, official sources told *The Hindu*.

The district administration had sent proposals to the government to hand over the land where a community hall and tsunami relief centre buildings existed, the sources said, adding the area would be formally handed over to the DRDO after the government passed an order. Pending issuance of the order, the DRDO had been asked to utilise the space, the sources said.

It was left to the DRDO to either use the existing structures for expansion or pull them down and use the space. The DRDO was likely to utilise the tsunami relief centre for setting up the library and use the space after demolition of the community hall for establishing the planetarium, the sources said.

As the community hall was being utilised by the local body, Thangachimadam panchayat and Mandapam panchayat union had given their consent in this regard, and the DRDO was likely to compensate the local panchayat for the building. The Collector handed over the tsunami structure, using his discretionary powers, the sources added.