

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – JANUARY 31, 2019

TAMIL NADU

◆ **Tamil Nadu Government - announced allocation of Rs 1.64 crore for forest fire management and procuring related equipment**

- ✓ The amount would be distributed to 10 forest divisions besides Yaanaimalai and Sathyamangalam tiger reserves
- ✓ The funds would be utilised training, awareness, strengthening institutional set-up and procurement of equipment.
- ✓ The Government proposes to train a total of 2,422 forest guards and fire watchers along with local communities at a budget of Rs 60.56 lakhs
- ✓ It had also proposed to form a forest fire response team for which the government had sanctioned Rs 22.26 lakh

◆ **Former British Prime Minister David Cameron delivered the K S Narayanan Centenary Oration - titled 'The New Geopolitics'**



- ✓ It was organized to commemorate the late industrialist's birth centenary in Chennai
- ✓ K S Narayanan is one of the country's early day entrepreneurs
- ✓ He was involved in promotion of varied enterprises such as Chemplast Sanmar Limited, Sanmar Shipping Limited, WS Industries Ltd., and Tamil Nadu Dadha Pharmaceuticals

◆ **Tamil Nadu - is ranked 18th in implementing self employment programme under the Centre's Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission**

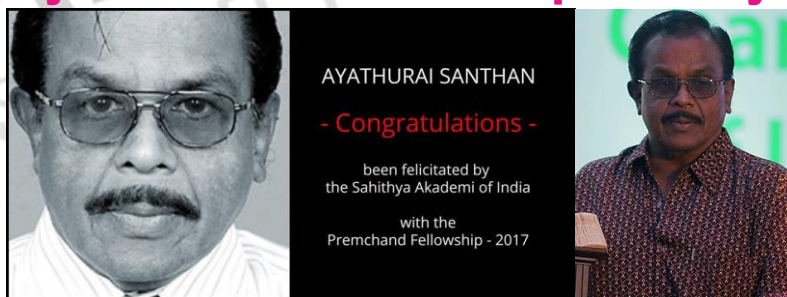


- ✓ The state was ranked fourth under the same category last year
- ✓ The Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) scheme falls under the ministry of housing and urban affairs.
- ✓ Based on the latest Systematic Progressive Analytical Real Time Ranking (Spark), Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat occupy the top two places among the 27 states
- ✓ Tamil Nadu is ranked after Karnataka, Sikkim and West Bengal, which occupy the 15th, 16th and 17th positions

◆ **C.V.Shanmugam, State's Law Minister – laid the foundation stone for the new dam to be built across the Thenpennai river at a cost of Rs 25.35 crores**

- ✓ It will be built in Thalavanur village of Villupuram district and expected to benefit the farmers from the districts of cuddalore and villupuram

◆ **Sri Lankan Tamil Writer, Ayathurai Santhan – was conferred with Sahitya Akademy's 'Premchand fellowship' for the year 2017**



- ✓ Ayathurai Santhan is a Jaffna-based writer from Suthumalai, Manipay
- ✓ He is a bilingual writer, who has written fiction and short stories in Tamil and English with an extensive bibliography
- ✓ His recent works in English include "The Whirlwind" (2009) and "Rails Run Parallel" (2015).
- ✓ The writer has penned 23 Tamil literary works apart from 7 English works
- ✓ The "Premchand Fellowship" is one of the prestigious fellowships instituted by the Sahitya Akademy in 2005 and is named after Hindi writer Premchand, who is popularly known as "Munshi Premchand", during his 125th Birth Anniversary

- ✓ It is given to "a person of eminence in the field of culture and literature" doing research on Indian literature or to creative writers from the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries other than India.
- ✓ The first recipient of the fellowship is a Pakistani national and Urdu writer Intizar Hussain.

STATES

◆ Maharashtra - launched a special scheme to curb infant deaths

- ✓ The government started distributing baby-care kits to the children born in primary health centres and government hospitals, as part of its efforts to reduce the infant mortality rate.
- ✓ The scheme is only applicable for the first child and it is expected to benefit around four lakh women across the state
- ✓ The baby-care kits contains a blanket, a small mattress, a towel, a thermometer, baby oil, shampoo, toys, nail-cutter, gloves and socks among other things, costing around Rs 2,000
- ✓ The state government has allocated Rs 20 crore for the scheme
- ✓ A similar scheme was introduced earlier in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Tamil Nadu with success

NATIONAL

◆ Prime Minister Narendra Modi - inaugurated the National Salt Satyagraha Memorial at Dandi in Navsari district, Gujarat

- ✓ The Memorial is the project of the Ministry of Culture, Government of India and is advised by a High-Level Dandi Memorial Committee (HLDMC) with IIT Bombay as a Design Coordination Agency
- ✓ The Memorial revisits the spirit and energy of 1930 Dandi March led by Mahatma Gandhi and 80 of his fellow Satyagrahis

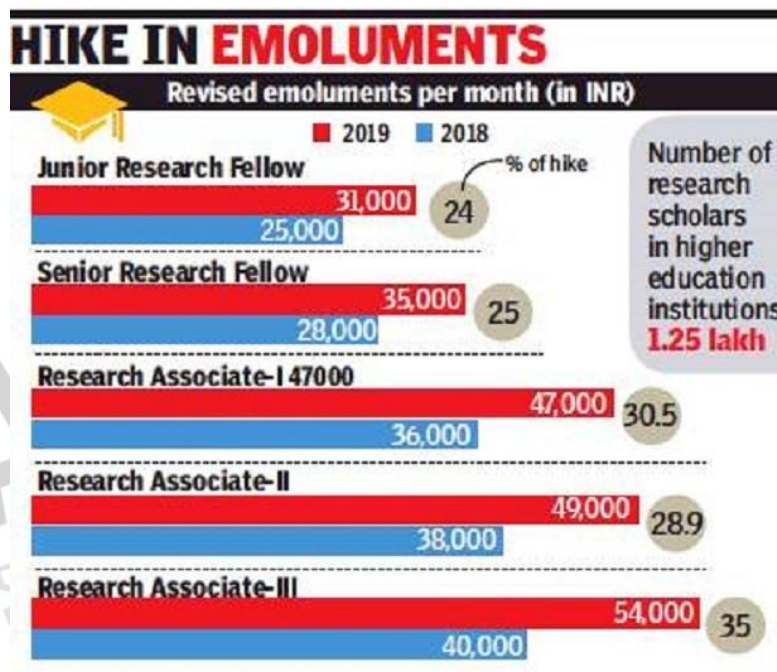


- ✓ As part of the civil disobedience movement against the British rule, they had marched 241 miles from Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad to the coastal village of Dandi and made salt from sea water, thus breaking the Salt Law imposed by the British.

◆ **The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) - has decided to cut 40,000 seats in government colleges across the country**

- ✓ The move follows the negligence of state governments to ramp up infrastructure and fix the staff shortage problem in the institutions
- ✓ Across India, 50% engineering seats were vacant in 2018
- ✓ AICTE has also decided not to approve any new engineering colleges for next two years

◆ **Union Science & Technology Minister, Dr Harsh Vardhan - announced hike in the fellowship of research scholars and associates with effect from January 1, 2019**



- ✓ The hike will be applicable for Ph.D students and other research personnel enrolled in any area of science and technology
- ✓ The hike in fellowship will directly benefit over 60000 research fellows in various institutions across the country

◆ **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs – sanctioned 478,670 more houses for the urban poor under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY-U)**

- ✓ The approval was made in the 42nd meeting of the Central Sanctioning and Monitoring Committee
- ✓ With this, the cumulative number of houses sanctioned under PMAY (U) now is 7,265,763

- ✓ Top 10 states
 - ✓ Andhra Pradesh - 105,956 houses
 - ✓ West Bengal - 102,895
 - ✓ Uttar Pradesh - 91,689
 - ✓ Tamil Nadu - 68,110
 - ✓ Madhya Pradesh - 35,377
 - ✓ Kerala - 25,059
 - ✓ Maharashtra - 17,817
 - ✓ Odisha - 12,290
 - ✓ Bihar - 10,269
 - ✓ Uttarakhand - 9,208

◆ **Minister of Railways, Piyush Goyal - launched the 'The Future of Rail' report of the International Energy Agency (IEA) on January 30, 2019**



- ✓ It is the first-of-a-kind report that analyses the current and future importance of rail around the world through the perspective of its energy and environmental implications
- ✓ This first ever global report has a focus on India, highlighting the unique social and economic role of railways in the country
- ✓ The International Energy Agency is an inter-governmental organisation that works to ensure reliable, affordable and clean energy

◆ **GST on Haj - has been reduced from 18% to 5%**

- ✓ This was announced by the Union Minister for Minority Affairs, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi
- ✓ The move is expected to significantly reduce the airfare, thus saving Haj pilgrims' Rs 113 crore this year
- ✓ The Minister said that this is for the first time since the independence that 2,340 women from India will go on 2019 Haj without Mehram

◆ **Swasth Bharat Yatra, the world's biggest cyclothon to push people to 'Eat right' - ended in New Delhi on January 28, 2019**



- ✓ The campaign was flagged-off on October 16, 2018 on the occasion of World Food Day
- ✓ The yatra began from 6 different locations - Leh, Panaji, Thiruvananthapuram, Puducherry, Kolkata and Agartala
- ✓ More than 10,000 volunteer cyclists covered over 20,000 kilometres spreading the message of 'Eat Safe, Eat Healthy and Eat Fortified'
- ✓ The movement was led by the Food Safety Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)

◆ **Western Railway – provides first-of-its-kind 'Segway' to Railway Protection Force (RPF) personnel posted in all major railway stations in Mumbai**



- ✓ Segway are the two-wheeled, self-balancing and battery powered electric vehicles
- ✓ The vehicle will help RPF in observing every nook and corner of the railway station
- ✓ At present, Segways are used by Marine Drive Police in South Mumbai.
- ✓ 6 segways were launched on the 70th Republic Day function at Churchgate Railway Station

COURT VERDICT

◆ **The Madras high court - quashed a G.O. that said minority educational institutions should admit not less than 50% of students belonging to the community concerned every year to retain their status**

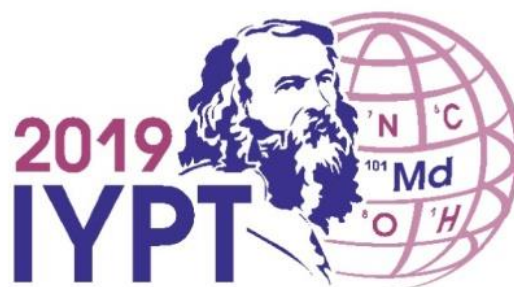
- ✓ Justice T Raja, while hearing a plea, said the state government did not have the power to pass such orders under the National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions Act, 2004
- ✓ As per the petitioner, the Institute of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, there cannot be a common rule throughout the state to admit a minimum of 50% minority students in such institutions as a condition for minority status, while the Christian population was only 6.1% in the state
- ✓ The Supreme Court has time and again held that the minority institutions gain minority character because they were established and administered by the minority community and not because of the number of minority students admitted therein

INTERNATIONAL

◆ **UNESCO - has declared 2019 as the 'International Year of the Periodic table of Chemical Elements' - to commemorate the 150th birthday of the periodic table of Chemical Elements on January 29, 2019 at its headquarters in Paris**



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



2019
IYPT
International Year
of the Periodic Table
of Chemical Elements

- ✓ Russian scientist Dmitry Mendeleev first published the Periodic table of 65 Chemical elements in the year 1869

- ✓ Today, the Modern Periodic table consists of 118 known elements, with significant contributions from notable scientists like Lord Rayleigh and Antoine-Laurent de Lavoisier
- ✓ UNESCO - The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
- ✓ The periodic table is a tabular representation of known chemical elements, arranged by atomic number, electron configuration, and recurring properties
- ✓ The seven rows of the table are called periods and the eighteen columns are called groups.
- ✓ Elements in a period have the same number of atomic orbitals, and elements in a group have the same number of electrons in the outer orbital (or valence electrons)

PERSONALITIES

◆ The board of ICICI Bank – had decided to terminate the services of Chanda Kochhar, former MD and CEO - with retrospective effect

- ✓ It had asked her to repay the benefits she had enjoyed while at the service
- ✓ The move follows a report by former Supreme Court judge, B N Srikrishna, which found Kochhar guilty of violating the bank's code of conduct in disbursing loans to Videocon group

HOW MUCH WILL SHE HAVE TO RETURN?

BONUS PAID
from 2009-10 till 2017-18:
₹10.03cr

ESOPS ALLOTTED
from 2009-10 till 2017-18: 94,00,000
which have current market value of:
₹346cr*

*Loss on cancellation of ESOPs would be the difference between market price and ESOP vesting price



- ✓ Kochhar had gone on “leave” on June 18, 2018 pending completion of the inquiry, but she had submitted her resignation on October 4

DEFENCE

- ◆ India - to buy 2 more “Phalcon” airborne warning and control system (AWACS) aircraft from Israel

INDO-ISRAEL STRATEGIC TANGO

► India established diplomatic relations with Israel in 1992

► 1999 Kargil conflict saw Israel rush emergency weapon supplies to India

► Israel now among top 4 arms suppliers to India (apart from Russia, US & France), with annual sales worth over \$1 billion

Missile Defence | 3 joint DRDO-Israeli Aerospace Industries projects under way for next-generation Barak surface-to-air missile systems for Navy (initial ₹ 2,606 crore), IAF (₹ 10,076cr) & Army (₹ 16,830cr). Earlier, after Kargil conflict, Barak-I system fitted on 14 Indian warships

Drones | India has over 100 Israeli UAVs, from Heron & Searcher-II surveillance & precision-targeting drones to Harop “killer” drones. India looking to induct more Heron & Harop drones

Radars | A wide array of Israeli sensors, ranging from Aerostat

to Green Pine radars, inducted over the years. Now also acquiring 66 air defence fire control radars for ₹ 4,577cr

AWACS | India now finalising deal for 2 Phalcon AWACS for over \$800 million. Three Phalcon AWACS, mounted on IL-76 aircraft, earlier inducted under \$1.1 billion deal

Missiles & Bombs | Several kinds of Israeli missiles & precision-guided munitions (PGMs) inducted by Indian armed forces. Range from Spyder quick-reaction anti-aircraft missiles, Python & Derby air-to-air missiles to Crystal Maze PGMs and Spice-2000



- ✓ India had recently signed Rs 4,577 crore contract with Israeli Aerospace Industries for 66 fire control radars, with maintenance and transfer of technology
- ✓ These 3-D surveillance and tracking radars will replace the aging Flycatcher radar systems present with the Army's Air Defence Corps
- ✓ Apart from this, the armed forces are also looking to induct additional “Heron” surveillance and armed drones as well as “Harop” killer unmanned aerial vehicles, which act as cruise missiles by exploding into enemy radars and other targets

ECONOMY

◆ UAE and Saudi Arabia Central Banks – to launch Common digital currency called ‘Aber’



- ✓ It will be used in financial settlements between the two countries through Blockchain and Distributed Ledgers technologies.
- ✓ The initiative was among the 7 strategic initiatives announced on January 19, 2019 in Abu Dhabi by the Executive Committee of the Saudi-Emirati Coordination Council
- ✓ Initially, the use of the currency will be restricted to a limited number of banks in each state - to study the feasibility of the currency through “practical application”

AWARDS

◆ Piyush Goyal, Minister of coal and railways - received the 4th annual Carnot prize awarded by the Kleinman Center for Energy Policy at the University of Pennsylvania

- The award recognises Goyal's tenure as Minister of power in which he is credited to have "reformed" the electricity sector and extended access to electricity to 18,000 villages, as documented by the International Energy Agency (IEA)
- After receiving the award, Goyal announced to donate the prize money of \$25,000 to the International Solar Alliance (ISA) to institute the ‘**Diwakar Solar award**’ (Divyang Akshay-urja Puraskar) for organisations working with children with special needs and the ones maximising use of solar energy



- ✓ Goyal had previously been unable to accept the award in the USA, due to the Amritsar train tragedy in October 2018
- ✓ Railways is currently embarking the world's most ambitious electrification programme, where in the next 4 or 5 years the entire grid will be 100% electrified
- ✓ The most prestigious award in the energy sector, Carnot Prize is named after French physicist, Nicolas Sadi Carnot who recognised that the power of the steam engine would "produce a great revolution" in human development

SPORTS

◆ **Derrick Pereira – appointed as coach for the India U-23 Football team on a ‘short-term’ basis**



- ✓ Derrick, currently technical director at FC Goa, will take charge of the team on March 2 and will remain in charge till the conclusion of the U-23 AFC Championship qualifiers in Uzbekistan in late March
- ✓ Derrick, a former international, has been coaching for the last 16 years but has never been associated with the national team

◆ **G Sathiyam (from Chennai, Tamil Nadu) – reaches career best ranking of 28 and becomes the highest-ranked Indian men’s table tennis player of all time.**

- ✓ Meanwhile, 2018 Gold Coast and Asian Games medalist, Manika Batra, became the first Indian woman to break into the top-50 in the rankings



- ✓ Sathiyam gained three spots to reach 28th while Batra moved up four spots to be 47th in the February rankings released by the International Table Tennis Federation
- ✓ Veteran Sharath Kamal, who was conferred with the Padma Shri last week, dropped three places to be 33rd in the men’s singles standings
- ✓ Sathiyam had lost to Sharath Kamal in the national table tennis championship men’s singles final recently
- ✓ The Indian men's team won the country's first medal at the Asian Games to end a 60-year-wait
- ✓ Sharath and Batra also combined to win a second bronze medal for India in the Asian Games

INTERNATIONAL DAY

◆ **Martyrs Day (Shaheed Diwas or Sarvodaya Day) – January 30**



- ✓ The observance of the day aims to honour the brave martyrs of India who have sacrificed their lives for the country
- ✓ On this day in 1948, at the age of 78, Mahatma Gandhiji, Father of the Nation was assassinated by Nathuram Godse
- ✓ In his first 'Mann ki Baat' of 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi called on everyone to observe 2-minutes silence to pay a tribute to the martyrs of India on the death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi on January 30
- ✓ In India, Martyr's day is celebrated on five days every year to pay homage to the freedom fighters of India.

Martyrs Day	Purpose
30th January	Death anniversary Mahatma Gandhi
23rd March	Death Anniversary of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev Thapar, Shivaram Rajguru
21st October	Observed by Police Department nationwide
17th November	Observed in Odisha on the death Anniversary of Lala Lajpat Rai
19th November	Birthday of Rani Lakshmibai, observed as martyrs Day in Jhansi

◆ **World Leprosy Day – January 30**

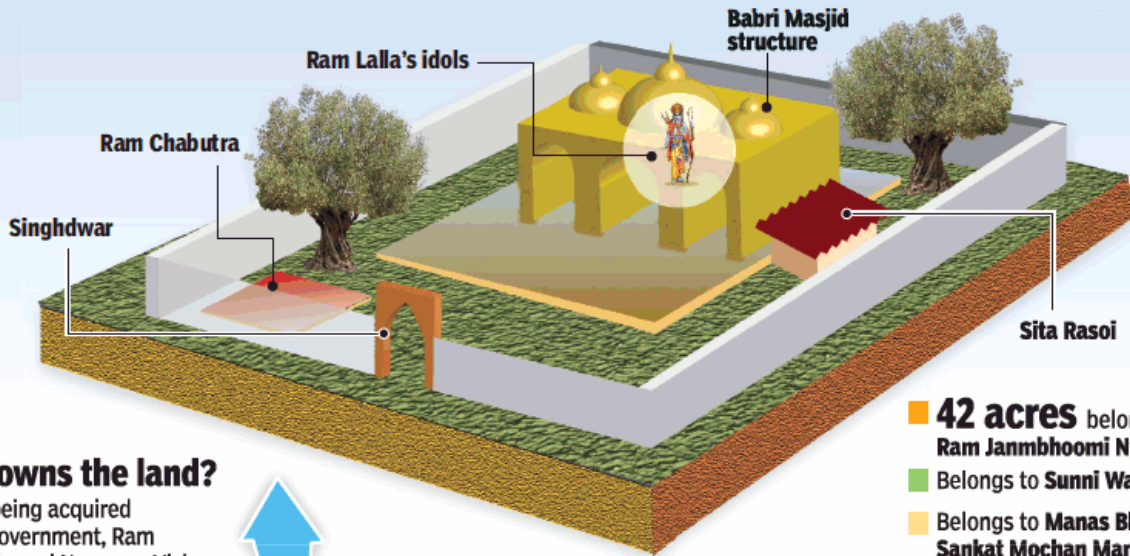
- ✓ The observance of the day stresses the need of eradicating the disease, highlighting the discrimination and stigma associated with it
- ✓ Leprosy, also known as Hansen's disease is a highly contagious infection caused by the bacterium, Mycobacterium leprae



- ✓ Theme 2019 - 'Ending discrimination, stigma, and prejudice'

AYODHYA LAND DISPUTE

After the Supreme Court deferred the hearing in the Ayodhya land dispute case, the Centre moved the apex court to return 67 acres of land – acquired by the government in 1993 – surrounding the disputed site in Ayodhya to its original owners. A look at the land in question and how the case has evolved



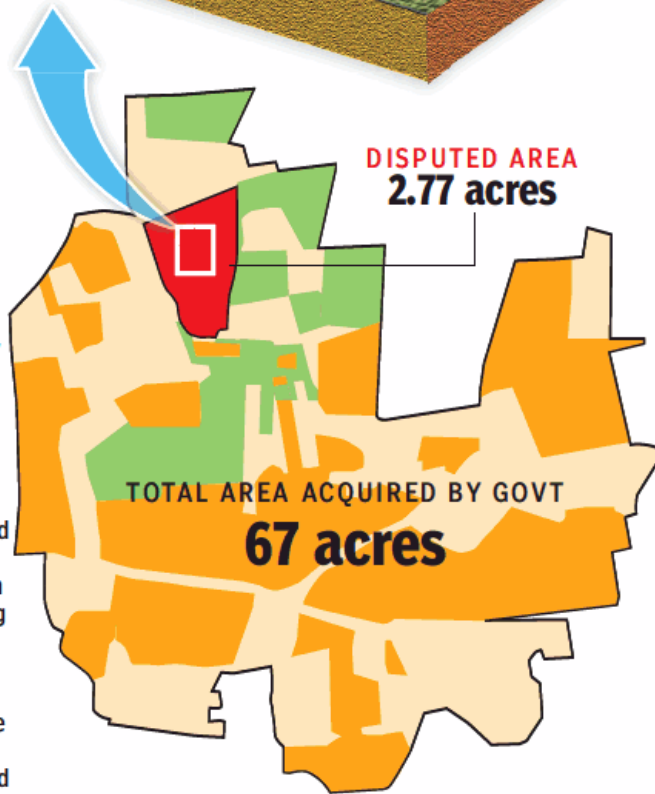
- **42 acres** belongs to Ram Janmbhoomi Nyas
- Belongs to Sunni Waqf Board
- Belongs to Manas Bhawan, Sankat Mochan Mandir, Ram Janam Sthan, Katha Mandap and Janki Mahel

Who owns the land?

Before being acquired by the government, Ram Janmbhoomi Nyas – a Vishwa Hindu Parishad trust – was the permanent lease-holder for 42 out of 67 acres and owned another acre of the 2.77 acres of disputed land where Babri Masjid stood before its demolition. The Centre's plea, if accepted, will mean transfer of two-thirds of the land to VHP, which has been at the forefront of the demand for a temple

Land shrinks but dispute stays

The expanse of the disputed land was previously established at 2.77 acres, which Allahabad high court had divided equally among three parties – Ram Lalla idol, Sunni Wakf Board and Nirmohi Akhara. But the Centre limited the disputed area to a minuscule 0.313 acres by considering only the plinth area of the demolished three-domed structure



SC stands firm

SC had in 1994 told the Centre to maintain status quo at the disputed site and surrounding area till adjudication of ownership of the core 2.77 acres. The status quo was upheld in 2004 and 2011 orders

2002 comes to 2019

The same politics played out 17 years ago when a VHP delegation met then-PM A B Vajpayee seeking the return of the 'undisputed' land so it could begin building a Ram temple. Vajpayee asked his law minister Arun Jaitley 'to look at legal and constitutional aspects' of handing over the land acquired by the government. The Centre had then put it as a 'serious move to push for a solution', not very different from the current NDA government's stance