

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley hints at making changes in land acquisition law

Congress-ruled states have petitioned the new Narendra Modi government on the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government's land acquisition law reinforcing the widespread criticism of the new law that has practically stalled all land acquisition.

"I have met a number of leaders of the last government who (are) very critical of the land bill... including Congress chief ministers who are now realising..." finance minister Arun Jaitley said, indicating the government may be inclined to changes.

India Inc has expressed concerns over the implementation of land acquisition law saying it could stall development in the country. Senior government officials have also spoken against the new land law that prescribes a cumbersome process of acquisition.

Jaitley, who was speaking at a function here to release a book — 'Exploding Aspirations-Unlocking India's Future' — by Rajiv Kumar, said a stable and decisive government would make it possible for India to exceed the growth rates of 8-9%.

"Even at the modest level of governance, we have grown at 8-9%. With much better level of governance, I think we have capacity to break the deadline you are setting for," he said.

The minister said in the new political environment, which is marked by a stable government at the centre, it would be possible to achieve higher levels of growth. "With new environment in the country, where history has once again provided us the kind of opportunity which it had provided 23 years ago, we can unleash these energy and perhaps go on higher level of growth rate," Jaitley said.

Indian economy had been growing at over nine per cent before the global financial meltdown of 2008. Growth rate slipped to below 5% in 2012-13 and 2013-14. In the current fiscal, it is estimated to go up to 5.7%.

Admitting that Indian economic decision making has many challenges within the government, he said, "The support system within this government is very strong. The parliamentary process...is largely supportive. And some who oppose are really not able to sustain the argument."

Referring to his Kolkata visit, Jaitley said, "The ruling party (TMC) was very critical of increasing the FDI in defence.

When we tried to reason out, they said our party in principle is against-...But, they also visited Singapore....They also realise that they require resources in addition for more economic activities."

He also added that prudent politics and economics can work together, emphasizing that the 'do nothing' and the populism does not work.

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