The news came as a special correspondence of Hindu dated 27.12.2016 and it indicated that The Centre on Monday released Rs.1,981.54 crore, through the National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development (NABARD), for Andhra Pradesh’s ambitious Rs.16,000 crore Polavaram irrigation project along the Godavari river. Releasing the amount, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said this should quell any sense of distrust that the people of the State had developed towards the Centre over funding for the project. Stressing that returns on investments in irrigation projects for agriculture can be visible by next season as opposed to investments in sectors such as manufacturing, where returns take a 'reasonably long period' to register, the Finance Minister said that such projects also lead to social satisfaction and economic prosperity.

He was speaking at an event attended by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, Union Water Resources Minister Uma Bharti, where funding was also disbursed for 99 irrigation projects in Gujarat and Maharashtra under the Long Term Irrigation Fund announced in Budget 2016-17.

“Using water resources to its optimal level is one of our prime goals and it is important that a very large part of funding goes to this,” Mr. Jaitley said. Stating that the people of Andhra Pradesh had been nursing a feeling of economic discrimination and unfair treatment since the division of the State, Mr. Jaitley said it was due to the BJP’s efforts that the UPA government made some commitments, though without any financial allocation. “The responsibility of fulfilling what we had said, fell on us. There are obviously challenges, but we were clear from the very first day that every promise we had made in the form of assistance would be satisfied,” Mr. Jaitley said. Terming the issue of water in the State’s dry regions as very sensitive, he said that it took some time for the Centre to find a way to fund the Polavaram project, but it had finally done it.

Restoring trust “Not only is today’s event a launch pad for a great project in Andhra Pradesh, it is also restoring a sense of confidence and trust in the people of AP.” Referring to the lessons from Gujarat and Maharashtra, which he said had taken significant strides on the irrigation front, Mr. Jaitley said: “If you remember, Gujarat was virtually dry in regions such as Saurashtra, Rajkot, Kutch, but they worked ahead of time and over the last 15 years, its agricultural growth showed substantial enhancement.