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## Centre okays funds for Dandi memorial

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SURAT: The work for Dandi Memorial has been put on a fast track by the central government, which last week gave financial sanction to the Rs 84-crore project coming up on a 15- acre plot at Dandi in Navsari district. The financial sanction has come after a two-year wait, but the Dandi Memorial Committee still expects to complete the project by December 2016.

Former vice-chancellor of Gujarat Vidyapith, Sudarshan Iyengar, who is chairman of the Dandi Memorial Committee, told TOI, "We have not yet fixed a deadline for the completion of the project. However, I can say that from now on the work for the memorial will done at a fast pace."

A Chakraborty, professor of Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bombay, which is the implementing agency for the project, said, "The work with regard to the drawings of the project would be over in a few months' time. The work is also in full swing with regard to the construction of the statues of the 84 satyagrahis."

Once the drawings are ready, tenders would be floated for the memorial, which will also depict Mahatma Gandhi's night halts from Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad to Dandi in 1930 through 24 panels. Each panel will have a theme. It will show Mahatma Gandhi's discussions with the satyagrahis on a particular night, sources said.

The Dandi Memorial project received an in-principle approval from the central government a couple of years ago. A committee was also set up for the execution of the project, but the responsibility on the ground to oversee its completion was not fixed.

The contract to make the busts of the 84 satyagrahis, who accompanied Mahatma Gandhi on the Dandi March, and the statue of Babu was given to IIT-B. The life-sized statue of Mahatma Gandhi was installed at Dandi last week.

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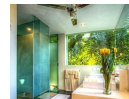
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