

HIS EXCELLENCY PU. AMOLAK RATTAN KOHLI, GOVERNOR OF MIZORAM TO ADDRESS THE HOUSE.

Honourable Speaker and distinguished Members of this August Assembly.

1. It is a great honour to welcome you to this Fourteenth Session of the Fourth Legislative Assembly of Mizoram. I also take this opportunity to convey my warmest greetings to you and to the people of Mizoram. I trust that the deliberations of this august House, during this momentous Session, will be conducted, as always, with dignity and honour most befitting this Assembly and will continue, as ever, to strengthen the time-honoured conventions and the rich democratic traditions of Mizoram and our great country.
2. It is a matter of great satisfaction that the overall law and order situation in the State continues to remain peaceful. I am extremely happy that Mizoram resolutely continues to remain free from violence. I congratulate the people of Mizoram for their dynamic support to the cause of peace and harmony. I also congratulate the religious institutions and the peace-loving social organisations of Mizoram for their proactive role in preserving our hard-earned peace.
3. My Government, let me assure you, is deeply committed, as ever before, to maintenance of peace and tranquility throughout the length and breadth of Mizoram as we firmly believe that peaceful atmosphere alone can bring about accelerated development in the State. Peace always ensures social security and the benefits of development to the people.
4. In spite of prevalence of peace and tranquility in Mizoram, my Government fully understands that there cannot be any compromise on our state of preparedness. Therefore, my Government continues to give paramount importance to the necessity of strengthening the law and order machinery of the State by providing it with trained manpower, modern and sophisticated equipments, weaponry and other inputs. I am happy to inform this august House that 701 personnel enlisted for the 2nd IR Battalion have completed their training and are positioned for duty. Addition of this trained manpower has significantly increased the effective strength of the State Police Force. Under the several programmes of modernization of the State Police Force, the Mizoram Police continues to underscore that necessity of better mobility, communication equipments, arms and ammunitions and better housing facilities. My Government continues to address the issues relating to the security of Lengpui airport and issues relating to fire services, jails, traffic management and crime investigation. Efforts are also on for making the Forensic Science Laboratory fully equipped and operational.

5. Our initiatives towards improvement of conditions in various jails of Mizoram has been vigorously pursued. A Perspective Plan for modernisation of Jails with an outlay of Rs. 17.76 crore has already been drawn up and submitted to the Ministry of Home Affairs for sanction. Water supply systems in Central Jail in Aizawl and District Jails in Saiha and Champhai have been improved. Conventional use of firewood has totally been replaced by domestic cooking gas in all the jails within Mizoram. In order to sensitise prisoners towards the necessity of leading a dignified life inside and outside the jail, various workshops for training of prisoners in trades like carpentry, weaving and tailoring have been introduced in Central Jail in Aizawl.
6. My Government is fully aware of the invaluable service rendered by the armed forces personnel. Through the active intervention of the Directorate of Sainik Welfare and Resettlement, my Government has been extending welfare services to the families and children of ex-servicemen of Mizoram and to retired ex-servicemen themselves. This year, we have been successful in securing employments to a total of 225 boys and girls in the three Services and in the Coast Guard formation.
7. During the current year, my Government has provided basic advanced training to 114 Home Guard volunteers and refresher course to 110 more in the Central Training Institute, Sesawng. 86 personnel of Excise Department have also undergone an advanced training of three months' duration. The Central Training Institute has also taken up the Watershed Development Project with an assistance provided by the Government of India for plantation of fruit-bearing trees.
8. I am also happy to inform you that the overall availability of foodgrains and other essential commodities in the State has been satisfactory. Foodgrains received during the year under the national programmes known as Sampooma Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) and the Midday Meal for School Children have contributed, to a large extent, in ensuring increased availability of foodgrains in the State. My Government will continue to make efforts to streamline the Public Distribution System even more to ensure easy and uninterrupted supply of essential commodities to the people living in each and every corner of the State. With the unrelenting efforts of my Government, cooking gas has now been made abundantly available in the State.
9. My Government continues to remain alert against adulteration of food items, petroleum products, cement and cooking gas. The Legal Metrology Wing has already been armed with 20 sets of verification tools for quality and quantity checking of petroleum products.

10. Honourable Members are aware of the fact that almost all the States of the Indian Union are facing extreme pressure on their State Exchequer, particularly on their revenue account. Such pressure, in many cases, have resulted in sliding of their position to the brink of withholding of salaries of their employees. I am happy to inform you that my Government, by exercising extreme caution, has ensured efficient fiscal management and has never allowed its financial position to deteriorate to such an extent. I would like to share with you my gratitude to the Central Government for extension of their pro-active and generous support to my Government by uninterrupted flow of Normal Central Assistance necessary for carrying out various initiatives of my Government. Release of a Special Central Assistance of Rs. 48.42 crore to the State has provided a great deal of relief. On the other hand, my Government is seriously bent upon reaching its objectives of reducing revenue expenditures. Apart from adopting various other economic measures, very recently, my Government has approved the Recommendations of the Committee for Identification of Government Vehicles for Disposal. This will enable the Government to dispense with not less than 1000 vehicles from its fleet and will also greatly enable the Government to regulate the number of Government vehicles in years to come, thereby reducing Government expenditure to a significant extent. With the same objective, my Government has also approved the Special Voluntary Retirement Scheme for those drivers, handymen and despatch-riders who are likely to be rendered surplus due to these novel initiatives of the State Government. It is heartening to know that the Government of India has well appreciated our endeavours and has already remitted, on our request, a sum of Rs. 70.00 crore to the State Exchequer for implementing the stated Special Voluntary Retirement Scheme.

11. My Government will continue to receive funds from the Central Government under the various programmes of the Central Ministries and under the Non Lapsable Pool of Central Resources (NLPCR). My Government will continue, as ever before, to pose viable project-proposals to the Central Ministries for getting a fair share of Central assistance out of the 10% of Plan fund reserved in various Ministries for development of the North East Region and will continue to draw in more and more Central resources for accelerating the process of development of Mizoram in various sectors.

12. As often stated in the earlier Sessions of this Assembly, my Government continues to assign its highest priority to achievement of self-sufficiency in production of foodgrain. The various initiatives taken by the State Government in promoting faster growth in the fields of agriculture and horticulture will receive greater degree of acceleration through the recently launched family-oriented self-sufficiency programmes under the ambitious Mizoram Intodelhna Project (MIP).

This programme has laid a special emphasis on self-sufficiency in foodgrains, pulses, oilseed, fruits and spices of divergent kind. This programme will also pave the way for crop diversification and will also gradually lead the farmers to switch over to settled methods of cultivation with higher assured returns. This programme will assist 21812 families of rural farmers in the current year and will cover additional 25000 more in the next year. A sum of Rs. 20.00 crore has already been provided for this special programme for the current financial year.

13. Our normal programmes of bringing more areas under Wet Rice Cultivation (WRC), replacing low-yielding local paddy seeds by high-yielding varieties, enhancing of crop intensity and gradual shift to mechanized agriculture wherever the terrain permits, will continue simultaneously. Recent establishment of Agricultural District at Champhai and an Agricultural Sub-Division at Khawzawl and shifting of Office of the District Agriculture Officer, Aizawl West to Mamit will add further strength to our continued effort to bring agriculture extension services of my Government to the doorsteps of the rural farmers.

14. For the benefit of rural cultivators, emphasis is also laid on development of irrigation facilities, wherever table land and terrain are found suitable. Several projects taken up in this year under the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP) and under Loan Assistance programme of Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF)-IX Development (NABARD) will ensure irrigation of 1459 hectares of rural areas of Mizoram this year. Organic farming, which invariably will results in competitive advantage of Mizoram produces, will receive special attention. The Bio-Fertilizer Production Unit at Sihphir will augment the use of organic fertiliser in the State. A network of warehouses and rural and primary markets are also in an intense process of development in all the key stations of Mizoram. Attempts are currently underway for invoking intervention, worth Rs. 7.14 crore, under the Market Intervention Scheme of the Ministry of Agriculture to assist the farmers in marketing their ginger produces at a remunerative price. My Government is aware that there is an urgent necessity of developing a chain of cold storages in the State for increasing the shelf-life of our highly perishable agriculture and horticulture produces. This issue will be addressed by my Government with right earnest.

15. The Department of Co-operation will continue to support different co-operative societies engaged in agriculture and allied activities and other co-operative federations by providing them with generous financial assistance. The Department will also continue to impart training and education on co-operative behaviours and on the economic benefits that can be derived through co-operative movements. The Department has also continued to provide the services of making essential fuel like petrol, diesel and kerosene oil as well as domestic cooking gas available without interruption to the consumers of Mizoram.

16. Recognising the inherent potentials endowed by nature to Mizoram, adequate emphasis has also been given to horticulture development. Needy farmers have been provided with tools and implements. My Government continues to promote direct participation of farmers in construction of link roads under the programme of providing horticulture potential area connectivity in rural areas. Infrastructure of the Horticulture Department have been strengthened in Lunglei, Saiha, Haulawng, Ngopa, N.Vanlaiphai, Reiek, Thingfal and Tuidam and such programme of strengthening horticulture infrastructure will continue in the next year. The benefits of Technology Mission for Development of Horticulture in the North Eastern Region has already added a new dimension to our initiative in this field. Various Mini-Missions under the Technology Mission, which have been launched in Mizoram, have already paid rich dividends to farmers. The Department will also continue to educate farmers through various awareness programmes. Under this Mission, Area Expansion Scheme for various Horticulture crops have been implemented during 2002-2003 covering 2233 hectares and concrete steps have been taken for commercial production of anthurium flowers. Under this Mission, community water harvesting facilities for providing irrigation during dry season have been created at various places and such facilities have now covered a total area of 100 hectares. Establishment of Model Floriculture Centre, Plant Health Clinic Laboratory and Leaf Analysis Laboratory are underway. To boost up mushroom production, Integrated Mushroom Centres are being established at Chite, Lunglei and Champhai. Jhumland Development Programme have been launched in 20 villages of Aibawk R.D. Block and in 43 villages of Thingdawl R.D. Block. During 2003-2004, emphasis will be given on production of market oriented produces such as grape, citrus, banana, coffee, blackpepper and bird's eye chilly. To produce quality seedlings, nurseries will be established under public and private sectors. Different planting tools and implements will be provided at subsidised rates.

17. My Government is aware of the great potentialities of Sericulture in Mizoram in providing employment opportunities and economic wellbeing to the rural families of Mizoram. Under the active initiative of my Government, the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, has approved our Sericulture Development Projects for all the 3 District Councils of Mizoram. First phase of the project will cover 200 hectares of land each in Lai, Mara, and Chakma Autonomous District Councils. The Government of India has already released Rs. 1.07 crore for each project.

18. In our continuous endeavour to attain self-sufficiency in milk production, works on 5000 ltrs. Capacity Dairy Plant at Kolasib has started with 100% central assistance under Integrated Dairy Development Programme. With funds provided under Non Lapsable Pool of Central Resources, projects of Mobilisation and Development of Animal Feed and Fodder Resources and Development of Sustainable Base for Pig Production are vigorously taken up and these two projects will ensure enhanced availability of animal feed to cattle farmers and hygienic meat products to the consumers of Mizoram. Construction of Veterinary Dispensary Building at Kawrtethawveng has been completed. Construction of Rural Animal Health Centres at Kawkulh, Sairang, Hortoki and Kawnpui, carried out within this year, will continue to strengthen the infrastructure and will also enable the rural farmers to derive extension services from these Centres.

19. The people of Mizoram have all along felt the shortage of power in the State and have strongly felt the necessity of developing our own sources of power not only for domestic consumption but for industrial and other development purposes as well. I am happy to inform you that the unrelenting efforts made by my Government has brought about happy results. With the recent issue of environment and forest clearances by the Ministry of Environment and Forest, decks have now been cleared for setting up our own 80 MW Bairabi Hydrel Project, which rightly has evinced a great deal of public interest in the State. My Government takes special pride in trully appreciating the necessity of this project and its immense potentials of transforming the entire economic picture of Mizoram. In order to enable the State to swiftly embark on construction activities without any loss of time, my Government will leave no stone unturned to source necessary funds for this project. Works on development of another 22.92 MW Bairabi Thermal Project is making steady progress and the Project is expected to be completed by October 2003. Works on 12 MW Serlui 'B' Hydrel Project have also been started and the rehabilitation works on this project are in an advanced stage of completion. Improvement of transmission and distribution systems will also continue side by side. With such initiatives of my Government, the power situation in Mizoram is all set for a great deal of improvement soon.

20. My Government continues to attach great importance to supply of safe drinking water to the urban and rural population alike. A composite water supply scheme for Bilkhawthlir and Chhimluang, at the cost of Rs. 3.12 crore, for a population of 7100, has already been commissioned in April 2002. Another water supply scheme for Ratu with an outlay of Rs. 1.08 crore for feeding a population of 3500 has also been completed and inaugurated in May, 2002. The composite Vairengte water supply scheme, taken up at a cost of Rs. 3.23 crore, designed to cater to the needs of 5600 population, was also inaugurated in December, 2002. Very recently, Hnahlan water supply scheme, taken up at the cost of Rs. 1.37 crore for feeding a population of 3600, has been inaugurated. All the 180 targeted habitations will be covered within this year under Rural Water Supply Programme with an outlay of Rs. 4.40 crore. Composite Kawpui water supply scheme, installation of booster pump at Serchhip Vengthar, shifting of sub-station of Greater Kolasib Water Supply Scheme, improvement and renovation of Aizawl Water Supply Scheme Phase - I with targeted distribution in Ramhlun North area, distribution network of Khawzawl Water Augmentation Scheme and improvement of existing Water Treatment Plant of Aizawl Water Supply Scheme with an overall outlay of Rs. 8.22 crore are taken up under the Urban Water Supply Scheme and works are progressing well. During the next year, 130 habitations will be covered under Rural Water Supply and Rural Sanitation Programme involving Rs. 10.07 crore. Works on Greater Mamit Water Supply Scheme and Kawrthah Water Supply Scheme will be started in the next year.

21. In our continuous endeavour towards faster development of basic road and building infrastructure in the State, we have attained unprecedented achievements. My Government can now boast of being the torchbearer of the North East Region in sourcing funds from the World Bank for road projects. My Government has availed a World Bank loan of Rs. 350.00 crore for improvement of 184.00 Km long stretches of state roads and rehabilitation and maintenance of 520.00 kms of roads within the State. Honourable Members may recall that this Project was formally launched on 17th August 2002. Under this Project, works have already started on Aizawl-Thenzawl-Buangpui (99 Kms), Damdai-Sialsuk (30 kms), Kawlkulh-Ngopa-Tuivai (96.625 kms) Khawzawl-Biate and Chekkawn-North Vailaiphai (77 kms) and Lungsan-Chawngte (47.67 kms) stretches. Remaining works of improvement, covering 85 kms and of maintenance, covering 269.13 kms, will be taken up in Phase-II starting from the next year. This World Bank project indeed is a laurel in the cap of the State Government.

22. Road laying initiatives of my Government are not confined to World Bank roads alone. In our unrelenting march towards linking 100% of our rural villages, 29 other roads are taken up under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) within this year and formation cutting of a combined length of 172.60 kms have already been completed. Proposals for 14 other roads with a total stretch of 184.98 Kms, costing Rs. 22.28 crore, are under active consideration of the Government of India and 16 more road projects, covering 231.33 kms, worth Rs. 44.39 crore, are under submission. Apart from these stretches, Aizawl-Reiek-W.Lungdar road (40 kms) and Rawpuichhip-Buarpui road (90 kms) are taken up during this year under NABARD loan and works are in good progress. During 2003 - 2004, Rs. 8.52 crore worth of works under NABARD loan will be taken up for completion of these roads. Under North Eastern Council (NEC) scheme, black-topping of 32 kms long Zamuang-Hriphaw road is nearing completion. Under Economic and Inter-state Importance Scheme of Government of India, construction of Kawlchaw-Tawngkawlawng road (16 kms), costing Rs. 10.01 crore, construction of a bridge over R.Tuichang near Hnahthial on Hnahthial-Thingsai road with an outlay of Rs. 2.80 crore and a bridge over R.Tlawng on Aibawk-Darlung Road, with an outlay of Rs. 2.08 crore, are making good progress. These works, however, will spill over to the year 2003-2004 and will be completed in the same year. An 82 metre long bridge over R.Tuivai, under construction with an outlay of Rs. 3.07 crore, is nearing completion. On completion, this bridge will enable us to have a better connectivity with our neighbouring State of Manipur. Our proposal of widening the existing Bawngkawn-Durtlang road at a cost of Rs. 7.00 crore is expected to be cleared by the Government of India soon. We have very recently received a sanction of Rs. 5.18 crore for the on-going State Capital Project.

23. During the current year, the Public Works Department is set to start works on multi-storey quarters for Assembly staff, staff quarters at Laipuitlang, Speakers bungalow and staff quarters at Tuikhuahtlang. Construction of 3 blocks of new Secretariat buildings at Khatla has started and All India Services (AIS) Transit Accommodation is nearing completion. Construction of New Raj Bhawan has started and works on District Judges bungalows and Senior Judges bungalows will start very soon. All these works will spill over to the year 2003-2004. The Government Housing Project consisting of 788 dwelling units, undertaken at Khatla through National Building Construction Corporation (NBCC), has also made visible progress. Fly-over Project over Khatla is also expected to start very soon. The Government of India has also sanctioned our proposal for construction of Aizawl City Centre at the cost of Rs. 12.36 crore.

24. With an objective of providing better healthcare to the people of Mizoram, emphasis has been laid on development of health sector infrastructures. Construction of 200-bedded hospital at Lunglei is well underway. Attempts are on to make a 50-bedded interim hospital functional as a precursor to a full-fledged 300-bedded State Referral Hospital at Falkawn. Construction of Rural Health Training Centre at Thingsulthliah is expected to be completed shortly. Construction of building for installation of CT Scan facility in Aizawl Civil Hospital has been completed and the machine is expected to be commissioned shortly. Satisfactory progress has also been made in establishment of Regional Diagnostic Centres at Champhai and Lunglei under grants provided by the Eleventh Finance Commission. In order to provide early detection of cancer on our home ground, equipments are being procured for setting up an Oncology Wing and Mammography Unit in Aizawl Civil Hospital under the Government of India assistance. Under NABARD loan assistance, Medical Gases Pipeline System is being set up in Aizawl Civil Hospital. For scientific disposal of medical waste, modern incinerators are being installed in Aizawl and Lunglei Civil Hospitals. In order to respond quickly to accident and emergency cases, Trauma Centres are also being set up in Lunglei and Aizawl.

25. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has now become a major contributor in strengthening our hospital machinery in Aizawl for Disaster Management and for improving our state of preparedness in such eventualities. 10 new Sub-Centres will also be completed within this year. 2 Community Health Centre (CHC) buildings at Mamit and Thenzawl under State Plan and one more at Chawngte under Border Area Development Programme (BALP) have been completed. Primary Health Centre (PHC) building at Pangzawl and Sialhauk have also been completed. A 10-bedded Maternity Centre at ITI Veng, Aizawl has been completed alongwith attending 25 staff quarters. Under Pradhan Mantri Gramodaa Yojana (PMGY), 30-bedded CHC at Thingsulthliah and a PHC at Sihphir are proposed and works on these projects will commence in the next year. District Mental Health Centre has also been set up at Aizawl Civil Hospital. Our proposals for construction of an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at Aizawl at the cost of Rs. 1.42 crore and for construction of an Outdoor Patients Department (OPD) in Civil Hospital at the cost of Rs. 3.71 crore have also been sanctioned under the NLPCR. A very encouraging Health Mela, sponsored by the Government of India was organised in Aizawl in October 2002, where expert physicians from reputed institutions like All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Regional Institute of Medical Science (RIMS) and Guwahati Neurological Research Centre (GNRC) actively participated side by side with our own medical professionals. During the Mela, a total of 21592 medical cases were investigated for diagnosis and treatment.

26. A high level of literacy in Mizoram is recognised all over. Realising the need for further improvement of the physical condition of our elementary and secondary schools, my Government has successfully launched the Elementary School Improvement Project (ESIP) and the Secondary School Improvement Project (SSIP), under which, 1683 schools have been covered with an outlay of Rs. 33.48 crore. 23 additional school buildings have been constructed under the grants provided by the Eleventh Finance Commission. During the current fiscal year, the national programme of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan has been launched in Mizoram with the sanction of Rs. 16.02 crore from the Government of India. This will cover District Elementary Education Plan prepared for each district of Mizoram. Increasing importance has been assigned to education and training of teachers through active interventions of our professional institutions like SCERT, DIET and CTE, where, this year alone, a total of 209 teachers ranging from primary level to post graduation level have received professional teacher training capsules. An added momentum has been given to Hindi education and propagation by appointment of 99 high school and 173 middle school teachers during this year. Our steadfast effort to provide computer-literacy for vocational purposes has now been strengthened by the scheme of Computer Literacy and Studies in Schools (CLASS), which aims at providing training of students in trades like stenography and typing.
27. My Government has continued to provide merit and special sholarships to students apart from providing sponsorships and scholarships to students pursuing studies in Sainik Schools, RIMC Dehradun, Banasthali and to children of armed forces. A total of 6895 such scholarships to middle school and high school students have been provided this year. In the year 2003-2004, apart from making similar efforts, 17490 poor students in elementary schools will be provided with school uniforms free of cost.
28. During the current year, 13410 students have been assisted with Post-Matric Scholarships and 154 more have been given Post-Matric Merit Scholarships. It is heartening to know that more and more candidates from Mizoram are forthcoming for Civil Services Examinations conducted by the Union Public Services Commission. This year alone, we have given cash incentive to 15 such candidates for passing such examinations. 25 other students have also received Mizoram Research Fellowship. A total of 21 students, sent to pursue Bachelor of Business Administration Course in Faridabad and Post-Graduate Diploma Course in Tourism and Future Management in Chandigarh, have also been paid stipends and book grants. A total of 183 students have also been sent to various engineering and medical colleges during this year.

29. In our continued endeavour to provide supports to educational institutions of higher levels, four private colleges have been amalgamated into two and provided with grants-in-aid under deficit system and one more private college has also been so elevated. One deficit college is also proposed to be provincialised during this year. Works on construction of Mizoram Hindi College Complex at Durtlang and College of Teacher Education at Republic Veng have made steady progress and both are expected to be completed next year. Under the World Bank assistance of Rs. 35.00 crore, construction works of Mizoram Polytechnic at Lunglei, Women Polytechnic at Aizawl and Directorate of Technical Education at Chaltlang are being started. My Government has also addressed the issues of neo-literate and school dropouts by opening 400 Continuing Education Centres and 40 Nodal Centres spread over Saiha, Lawngtlai, Lunglei and Mamit Districts to eradicate illiteracy under Eradication of Residual Literacy Project.
30. I would like to emphasise that initiatives taken by my Government towards strengthening education and training infrastructure in Mizoram will continue till Mizoram attains the highest level of literacy in the country. Adequate emphasis will continue to be laid on development of a high degree of academic excellence and high level of technical and professional literacy among the upcoming youth of Mizoram. It is also a matter of great satisfaction that the Mizoram Central University Complex at Tanhril is taking shape at a very fast pace.
31. My Government is deeply committed to the welfare and wellbeing of the rural people of Mizoram and to their upliftment. My Government is also consciously aware that the overall development of Mizoram cannot be achieved without addressing the issues of rural development seriously. 479 families have been provided with new dwelling houses and houses of 246 others have been upgraded during this year under Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY). Assistance to 2150 families for construction of dwelling houses have also been provided under PMGY at the cost of Rs. 6.26 lakhs during the current year. A total of 3.56 lakhs mandays and additional 3.26 lakhs mandays have been generated respectively under SGRY-I and SGRY-II during this year. This has provided an enormous opportunity of rural employment in Mizoram. The foodgrains released under these programmes also provided a great relief to the rural workers of Mizoram by making additional quantity of foodgrains available to them. Under Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), 88 Self Help Groups have also become active, contributing enormously in improving their members' economic position through multiplier effect.

32. In order to ensure more and more percolation of the benefits of rural development programmes of my Government, there is a proposal of increasing the present number of Rural Development (RD) Blocks. My Government has already approved setting up of a RD Block at Bilkhawthlir. In order to address various technical aspects of construction activities undertaken by RD Department, my Government has also approved creation of an Engineering Wing, headed by a Executive Engineer, in the RD Department. The State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD) has also become functional in Kolasib.
33. Initiatives taken under the Border Area Development Programme (BADP) continues to strengthen rural infrastructure like truckable and jeepable roads, community halls, school buildings and playgrounds in all the 12 RD Blocks falling in the proximity of our international borders with Myanmar and Bangladesh. From this year, the RD Department has also undertaken plantation of fruit-bearing trees in these Blocks under BADP. 7 villages of Mamit area and 11 villages of Serchhip area have now taken up horticulture, soil conservation and other cultivation activities through community participation under Integrated Wasteland Development Programme (IWDP). This particular programme has a target of development of 8000 hectares and 7995 hectares of land respectively in Mamit and Serchhip at the respective cost of Rs. 4.80 crore and Rs. 4.79 crore. In the forthcoming year, 2150 rural families will be given assistance for construction of new houses and existing houses of 1230 families will be upgraded. RD Department will also embark on the scheme of providing potential area connectivity from the year 2003-2004. This connectivity programme has an outlay of Rs. 76.00 crore spanning over a period of 3 years. In the next year, all the RD programmes will continue to provide benefits to the people of the areas covered by such programmes.
34. In order to augment the supply of fish production of Mizoram, 118.46 lakhs fish seed have been distributed at subsidised rate to the fish farmers of Mizoram during the current year. 4 fish-seed farms have been constructed and 3 more are nearing completion under the funds provided by the Government of India under NLPCR. A total of 163 hactres of water area has been brought under pisciculture within this year. An additional 340 hectares will be brought under this programme through Fish Farmers Development Agency and 65 hectares more will be covered by NEC assistance during the next year.

35. My Government continues to attach a great importance to the protection of our forest wealth and our pure and pristine environment. The Department of Environment and Forest of my Government has engaged itself in afforestation and reclamation of degraded lands through active involvement of 15 Forest Development Agencies under the National Afforestation Programme. During the current year, the Department has taken up the task of afforestation of 10980 hectares of land covering 230 villages of Mizoram. Under the Green Mizoram Programme, 4.00 lakhs saplings have been planted through individual initiatives and the initiatives of Government Agencies and NGOs. In order to ensure scientific management of our existing forest, my Government has obtained the approval of the Government of India to the Working Plans and Schemes in respect of 5 Territorial Forest Divisions of Mizoram, drawn up by the Department on the directives of the honourable Supreme Court of India, enabling us once again to resume timber operation to meet the timber demand of the local people at reasonable price.

36. Anticipating a gregarious bamboo flowering during the year 2005 - 2007, my Government is actively engaged in planning technical strategy for maximum extraction and utilisation of our rich bamboo resources. Under the Bamboo Development Programme, my Government is intent on providing good quality seedlings both of indigenous and exotic species, to farmers for plantations. My Government, in its continuous endeavour to ensure scientific management of our enormous bamboo resources, has also announced the Bamboo Policy of Mizoram very recently. The Forest Department has also earned a revenue of Rs. 1.70 crore during the current year through sale of forest mahals and grants of forest permits. In the next year, the emphasis of my Government on the stated initiatives will continue. We also have a programme of setting up a Tissue Culture Laboratory and a Bamboo Research Centre under the aegis of the Central Forest Training and Research Institute. My Government will continue to have an effective surveillance and protection of our wildlife and will resolutely protect our wildlife sanctuaries.

37. Keenly aware of the potential and vital role that small industries can play for rapid economic development and in providing large scale employment opportunities to the people of Mizoram, particularly to the educated unemployed youth, my Government has been actively promoting small scale as well as village and cottage level industries. The Department of Industries has also taken up the projects of development of the Industrial Growth Centre (IGC) at Luangmual with a Central assistance of Rs. 15 crore and the Export Promotion Industrial Park (EPIP) at Lengte near Aizawl Airport with a similar assistance of Rs. 10 crore. Construction of a network of internal road within the IGC has been completed and land development works will follow soon with an amount of Rs. 1.80 crore recently released by the Government of India. Taking over of land at Lengte from 115 landholders will be completed soon and my Government will be in a position to develop this area for the proposed EPIP. The MIFCO has been declared as a nodal agency for execution of Industrial Food Park Project in Chhingchhip at the cost of Rs. 4 crore sanctioned by the Government of India. Foundation stone for setting up an Industrial Infrastructure Development Centre (IIDC), to be executed through the intervention of ZIDCO, has already been laid at Pukpui, Lunglei. We have also made a significant progress towards setting up a Bamboo Processing Industrial Unit at Sairang under a joint collaboration of the Bamboo Development Agency and an Export Oriented Industrial Unit of Falta Special Economic Zone of West Bengal. The Department of Development of North East Region of the Government of India has already released an assistance of Rs. 3 crore for development of one more similar unit. Proposal of my Government for construction of link roads leading to various bamboo cluster areas at the cost of Rs. 12.10 crore is also under active consideration of the Government of India. These roads will contribute substantially in extraction of marketable bamboo wealth of Mizoram and also will open a new vista for induction of different varieties of hybrid bamboo in Mizoram. The Geological and Mining Wing of the Department of Industries is engaged in tapping the hidden wealth of Mizoram. The Wing has already identified several deposits of sandstone and shell limestone in several parts of our State and a programme of their extraction for commercial use is planned by my Government. It is very heartening to know that the Ministry of petroleum has issued petroleum license for exploration of our hydrocarbon deposits in one of the identified Blocks of Mizoram. My Government will resolutely continue to take accelerated initiative for exploration of other Blocks and other potential areas of Mizoram.

38. In our continuous endeavour to give adequate thrust to Development of Information Technology (IT) and IT penetration, my Government has already commissioned 23 Community Information Centres in RD Blocks and newly created District Headquarters. Under the grants provided by the Eleventh Finance Commission, we have made a significant progress in setting up District Centres for Computer Education for School Children in all the District Headquarters of Mizoram. These centres will be commissioned shortly. My Government has also undertaken an extensive programme of imparting IT Entrepreneur Development Programme (EDP) through ZENICS with a financial assistance provided by the Ministry of Information Technology. E-Governance Plan for the State has been drawn up and submitted to the Government of India for providing necessary technical and financial assistance. ZENICS has also been entrusted with a very professional and responsible work of preparation of photo identity cards for the voters of Mizoram.

39. Being aware of the commitments enshrined in the Mizoram Peace Accord, my Government has continued to pursue its programme of development of Border Trade Centres at Zokhawthar on India - Myanmar border and at Kawrpuichhuah on India - Bangladesh border. The Border Road Organisation, entrusted with the works of development of such centre at Zokhawthar, has recently completed architectural designs and layout plans for construction of a Composite Land Customs Station building at Zokhawthar at an estimated cost of Rs. 2 crore provided by the Ministry of Commerce, Government of India. Construction activities on this Centre are expected to start very soon. A technical consultancy firm is also engaged currently in formulating a contour survey report and a layout plan for similar trade centre at Kawrpuichhuah. Approach road to Kawrpuichhuah, under construction with the funds provided under BADP, is expected to be completed very soon. Intense interactions with the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India are going on in our efforts to convince the Government of Bangladesh to open up their Land Custom Station at Thegamukh on Bangladesh territory opposite to our Land Custom Station at Tlabung (Kawrpuichhuah). This is one of the burning agenda in the forthcoming Secretary Level India - Bangladesh Trade Talks to be held in New Delhi in the later part of March this year. The Mizoram Intodelhna Project Marketing Board has also taken several initiatives to facilitate export of ginger and raw bamboo poles from Mizoram to Bangladesh through custom clearances respectively at Tlabung on India side and at Rangamati on Bangladesh side. Several traders and members of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce have also shown keen interest on such prized produces of Mizoram.

40. Recognising the tourist potentialities of the State of Mizoram, my Government has made utmost endeavour to market tourism of Mizoram to the other States of India and other countries abroad. With the improvement of flight frequencies from 3 to 6 in a week between Aizawl and Kolkata, the flow of inbound tourist is expected to increase tremendously. The Department of Tourism has successfully participated in Travel and Trade Fairs in Bangalore, Chennai and New Delhi. We also participated in the World Trade Mart held in London in November, 2002 with an objective of gaining exposure outside the country. In collaboration with the Mizoram Central University and the Institute of Tourism and Future Trends of Chandigarh, the Department has actively contributed in exposing our educated youth to the atmosphere of national level business of tourism and hospitality management. It is heartening to know that more than 30 of our young boys and girls could secure placements in tourism and hospitality services outside the State within this year. The Department will continue to make dynamic approaches towards providing more and more employment opportunities to our upcoming educated youth in this high profile profession. My Government will continue to develop tourism infrastructure in the State to effectively cope up with the rising inflow of tourist in Mizoram.

41. Our adventurous and forward-looking youth and sportsmen have made us extremely proud by earning innumerable laurels in the fields of sports in state, national and international level meets and competitions. Most prominent among them has been the distinguished victory in the Subroto Mukherjee Cup Football Tournament in December 2002. We also won Gold Medal in Women Boxing category in the National Games, 2002 held at Hyderabad. Eight Scouts and Guides including two leaders from Mizoram represented India in the 20th World Scouts Jamboree held in Thailand in January, 2003. Similarly, two Scouts and one Guide participated in SAARC Friendship Camp held in Maldives Island in the Indian Ocean in February, 2003. It is a matter of pride for the State to host the National Women Boxing Championship on our own home ground in Aizawl very recently. Understanding the inherent strength and potentialities of our youth and sportspersons, my Government will continue to build up different kinds of sports infrastructure within the State for promotion of sports and youth activities and continue to participate in national and international level meets and championships for attaining higher and higher achievements.

42. My Government has given focussed attention to development of the rich culture and traditions of Mizoram by promoting different cultural activities within the State and outside. For the first time, my Government organised Thalfavang Kut in its traditional manner. In order to preserve our historical landmarks and monuments, my Government has taken up heritage protection scheme under the grants provided by the Eleventh Finance Commission. In order to make the nation aware of our rich culture, Mizoram Cultural Troupes have also participated in Inter-State Festivals outside Mizoram in different part of the country on 10 different occasions during the current year. 25 artistes from Mizoram also received training on dramatic technique in the National School of Drama, New Delhi in October, 2002. In the year 2003-2004, my Government will continue to participate in national and international level cultural meets and also proposes to promote cultural activities by organising cultural meets in twelve different places within Mizoram. National Book Fair will be organised in Aizawl. With an active participation of Library Association of Mizoram, a seminar of like-minded people will be organised in Aizawl. Heritage sites will be protected with greater vigour and beautification of such sites will be carried out during the next year. We have recently celebrated our greatest cultural festival of Chapchar Kut in the most befitting manner.

43. Realising the necessity of gearing up the State machinery for the forthcoming Election to the Mizoram Legislative Assembly, the Department of Election has vigorously taken up the task of issuing Electors Photo Identity Card to the voters of Mizoram. So far 3.34 lakhs electors have been photographed and as many as 49000 identity cards to voters of Assembly constituencies have been distributed. This programme is expected to be completed in the year 2003 - 2004. Electoral rolls for Assembly Constituencies have been finally published in January 2003.

44. This year, under the funds provided by the Government of India, the Department of Labour and Employment has continued to impart training on 14 vocational trades in the 200-capacity Industrial Training Institute (ITI) in Aizawl. Under the similar assistance, the Department has undertaken the scheme of setting up of 2 new ITIs in Lunglei and Saiha and has also initiated modernisation plan for existing ITI, Aizawl in our unrelenting endeavour to provide assistance to job seekers. The Department has also assisted the Mizoram Coaching Academy for running coaching classes and for providing career guidance. The Department proposes to setup a Special Employment Exchange in Aizawl, Lunglei and Saiha for physically disadvantaged groups under assistance provided by the Government of India.

45. My Government has also undertaken construction activities of District Court buildings at Kolasib, Saiha and Mamit during the current year. This initiative will cover all the District headquarters and all the autonomous District Council headquarters in the next year. Fast Track Courts have been set up in Aizawl and Lunglei under the grants provided by the Eleventh Finance Commission. On the other hand, the Parliamentary Affairs Department has continued to oversee the welfare and wellbeing of the former Member of District Councils (MDC) and Member of Regional Councils (MRC) and they have now been granted a higher pension. Eligible family members of the deceased former MDCs and MRCs will be receiving a family pension of Rs. 2500 per month at a fixed rate.
46. My Government has also undertaken the task of preparation of house site plans for allotment of 2000 plots to the landless families of Mizoram. Summary survey of agriculture land of 18 RD Blocks and survey of bamboo development projects have been carried out in several villages covering 3120 plots of lands. During the next year, the Department of Land Revenue and Settlement will carry out formulation of house site plans for 4000 plots of land with the similar objective and will also carry out summary survey of agriculture land under revision programme in all the 18 RD Blocks. Cadastral survey of villages and townships will continue. The Department also proposes to carry out aerial cadastral survey of 1000 sq kms. of selected areas within Mizoram.
47. Using Sattelite Remote Sensing Technology, Natural Resources Information System is being created in Lunglei, Saiha and Lawngtlai District by the Science and Technology Wing. Works on environmental studies of Aizawl City using the same technology is in progress. In collaboration with the National Council of Science Museums (NCSM), a Sub-Regional Science Centre is being established at Berawtlang, Aizawl to provide recreational and educational facilities the students and the general public. The Capital cost of this project is Rs. 2.00 crores, 90% of which is provided by the NCSM. The project is scheduled to be completed within this year.
48. The Local Administration Department of my Government has been assisting families of Government employees and other needy families by providing loans for construction of dwelling houses. During the current year, 2416 Government employees and 606 other beneficiaries have been provided with such loans for construction of dwelling houses. In the year 2003-2004, my Government proposes to provide housing loan to 2548 Government employees and housing loan to 606 other beneficiaries. The Department has continued to develop footpaths and pedestrian pavements within Aizawl and other towns during the current year and the process will continue in the next year. Under Urban Poverty Alleviation Schemes, training in different trades have been provided to a number of poor entrepreneurs of Mizoram.

49. My Government is fully aware of the necessity of providing relief to the aged, persons with disability and to women and children of our society. The focus of the Social Welfare Department during the current year has been on programmes relating to the rehabilitation of people with disabilities. Under the National Programme for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities, multipurpose rehabilitation workers and community based rehabilitation workers have been appointed in the RD blocks and villages to oversee the welfare of such disabled persons. Special schools, vocational training centres, workshops and facility of credit schemes to assist them have been instituted. The Mizoram State Disabilities Society has also been set up in Mizoram. For rehabilitation of substance abusers, a Drug Prevention Division is being setup in the Social Welfare Directorate soon. Three selected Blocks of Tianguam, Thingdawl and Lunglei will be covered by a Centrally Sponsored pilot project of SWAYAMSIDHA for socio-economic upliftment of women with particular reference to their political, social and civil rights.
50. Menace of drug trafficking and drug abuse and violation of prohibition law have been firmly dealt with by my Government. Besides regular surveillance, intense pressures have been mounted on violators. 712 drug traffickers and abusers and 3240 violators of prohibition law have been apprehended. A revenue of Rs. 1.35 crore have been collected by the Excise Department during the year. My Government will resolutely ensure similar measures in the next year to keep menaces at bay.
51. With the introduction of sales tax regime in Mizoram, supplemented by other taxes like entertainment tax and passenger goods tax, my Government has been able to make an unprecedented collection of more than Rs. 20 crore this year. The country will be shortly switching over to Value Added Tax (VAT) regime. Under the new regime, the Central Government has taken a commitment of recovering whatever shortage that may occur in collection of revenue in comparison to the sales tax regime.
52. Realising the social commitment of the Mizoram State Transport, my Government has continued to provide services to various routes, many of which have undoubtedly been uneconomical. However, considering the plight of the poor rural commuters, the Department of Transport will continue to ply buses in all the identified routes. Considering the congestion of Aizawl City, my Government has a proposal of developing an Inter State Bus Terminal at Aizawl with an outlay of Rs. 9 crore earmarked by the NEC for this work. There is also a proposal of developing several parking lots in private sector in various pockets of Aizawl to ease the existing traffic congestion.

53. My Government has vigorously pursued its objectives of shifting the 1st Assam Rifles Battalion from the congested heart of Aizawl City to nearby Zokhawsang range. The approach road to the range and the internal road within the new area have been developed satisfactorily by the Border Road Organisation. It is expected that administrative and financial sanction for development of building infrastructure on the new sites for shifting the battalion will be accorded by the Central Government soon.

54. My Government has also taken an ambitious task of creating district administrative buildings in all the five new districts of Mizoram with an amount of Rs. 17 crore granted by the Eleventh Finance Commission. Works on this project have progressed well and the entire project is expected to be completed within the next financial year.

55. It will not be possible to highlight in all details the efforts made by my Government through each and every Department. However, I cannot remain without mentioning the contribution of the Directorate of Lotteries in collecting a total revenue of over Rs. 5.50 crore till the middle of February this year. My Government, in its endeavour to raise its own resources to the maximum level, has also taken a decision to introduce an on-line lottery for collecting more and more revenue for development purposes. The Motor Vehicle Wing of the Transport Department has also taken initiatives in collecting taxes and fees, thus, contributing substantially to our additional resources generation programme. The Directorate of Account and Treasuries of my Government has undertaken the onerous task of revision of pensions and as many as 1766 pensions have been revised during the current year. 531 fresh pension cases have been cleared for payment. The Administrative Training Institute has been actively engaged in providing training to 280 gazetted and 348 non-gazetted officials of the Government of Mizoram. A remarkable training programme on Mizo Shorthand has been introduced for the first time in February 2003 and training on Disaster Management has also been introduced in the current year. The Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms has successfully conducted the prestigious Mizoram Civil Service Examination during the current year, as a result of which, my Government will be able to recruit 20 successful candidates. The Department of District Council Affairs of my Government successfully conducted elections to the Lai Autonomous District Council and the Chakma Autonomous District Council. The District Council Affairs Department has also taken a concrete step towards framing appropriate rules and regulations for the three District Councils. Uniform Conduct of Business Rules for the three District Councils have been completed. The Economic and Statistics Department has continued to provide invaluable data and statistics to assist my Government in policy planning and programme implementation. The Department of Information and Public Relations

has not only contributed in disseminating informations relating to the activities of my Government but has also been instrumental in presenting our State's image to the outside world by participating in Republic Day Celebrations in New Delhi and by organising press tours and Bharat Darshans. A notable achievement of this Department was the press tour of 30 journalists to Sikkim. The Sinlung Hill Development Council has now been strengthened by appointment of more council members. The Fire Service Organisation is being strengthened by additional fire tenders and other equipments. The Water and Soil Conservation Department has continued to promote plantation of coffee and large cardamom in Mizoram besides continuing its programme of Tuirial HEP catchmen area treatment and soil conservation for enhancing productivity of degraded land in the catchmen of flood prone rivers. With our unrelenting endeavours, flight frequency between Aizawl and Kolkata has now been increased. It is also expected that a regular flight will be introduced between Aizawl and Guwahati sector soon.

56. I am extremely happy to receive active supports of all the Central Agencies located in Mizoram towards furthering the initiatives taken by my Government. I am confident that we will continue to get their wholehearted support in time to come. I am extremely happy over the sense of responsibilities and devotion displayed by the functionaries of the Government of Mizoram in our march towards reaching the objectives of my Government.

57. In fine, I take this opportunity to reaffirm the deep commitments of my Government towards fulfillment of all our objectives through various programmes and policy initiatives. With your unflinching support and with the blessings of the Almighty, I am confident that we shall continue to march ahead towards achievement of our ultimate objective of ushering Mizoram into a model State of India. I trust that your deliberations during this Session will bear eloquent testimony to these commitments.

58. I wish your deliberations all success.

Thank you.

Jai Hind.

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