

PROCEEDINGS OF THE THIRTEENTH & BUDGET SESSION OF THE
MIZORAM LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY HELD AT THE ASSEMBLY HALL
FROM 22nd MARCH, 1977 TO 30th MARCH, 1977

1st Sitting on 22nd March, 1977 at 11 AM

Pu Vaivenga, Speaker in the Chair, Chief Minister, Six Ministers and 22 Members were present.

Lt. Governor Speech.

Mr Speaker and Hon'ble Members,

I am happy to welcome you to the Sixth Budget Session of the Mizoram Legislative Assembly and extend to you my cordial greetings. We are meeting under the shadow of a grievous loss suffered by the country in the untimely demise of late Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed who died in harness as President of India. We are also deeply grieved at the passing away of Shri Lalhmingthanga who was an illustrious Member of this House. I offer my heart-felt condolence to the berieved families.

2. This is the third year in succession that I am having the apportunity of addressing you. Many events of crucial importance have taken place during the preceding year. On the national scene the country continued to consolidate the gains of emergency. India emerged as one of the very few countries in the world which succeeded in halting and reversing the inflationary trend, India's position improved vastly in the balance of international trade and our foreign exchange reserves recorded a spectacular increase. Increase in food-grain production enabled us to build up an unprecedented buffer stock. Industrial production in the factories matched the agricultural production in the field, thanks to a newly found sense of discipline in the industrial labour and sound fiscal policies. India's stock on the international scene rose to new heights. Parhaps, an even greater and more creditable achievement during this year was the bold decision taken by the Prime Minister to go to the polls and seek a fresh mandate from the people. There can be no doubt that this bolt step has once again clearly and categorically re-affirmed our country's commitment to democracy. We can, thus, hold our heads high as citizens of the largest democracy in the world.

3. Nearer home in Mizoram, the year 1976-77 was marked by developments of considerable importance. A central fact of life in Mizoram has been the continuing state of disturbances created by the unlawful Mizo National Front. The year began with some very hopeful developments when the leaders of these organizations, made a request for holding talks with Government of India for a peaceful settlement, having realized the futility of violent methods and of seeking assistance from foreign countries. This was a healthy development which culminated in the signing of an agreement on 1st July, 1976. In this agreement the MNF leaders declared their resolve to seek a solution of all problems in Mizoram within the framework of Indian Constitution and acknowledged Mizoram as an integral part of India. They also decided to abjure violence and deposit their arms after coming into mutually agreed camps. On the basis of this agreement operations were suspended by the Security Forces for a period of three months in order to facilitate the MNF, and MNA personnel coming into camps. This agreement was hailed and people welcomed the return of peace with great joy. Unfortunately, subsequent events belied these hopes. MNF leaders tried to put distorted meaning and interpretation on the terms of agreement and carried on unlawful activities in spite of suspension of operations. The greatest blow to this agreement was their failure to come into camps and deposit their weapons. There was also large-scale movement of armed gangs during this period in violation of this agreement. In these circumstances, Government of India were compelled to resume operations for a limited period. However, keeping in view the overwhelming desire for peace among the people of Mizoram, operations were again suspended with effect from Christmas Day i.e., 24th December, 1976. This suspension of operations is yet continuing but the prospect of a lasting peace in Mizoram is dependent largely on the response which may be forthcoming from the MNF. Government of India have gone all-out to create conditions for a peaceful settlement but the response from the MNF has so far been supported every move for bringing about lasting peace. We still hope that the efforts being made by the Government of India will usher in an era of peace.

4. In the field of developmental activities my Government have continued to push ahead with vigour and determination. The size of our Annual Plan for the next year has been increased to Rs 11.07 crores which gives us an increase of about 20% over the budgetted allocation for the current year. This is a substantial increase which has been possible on account of the special efforts made by the Chief Minister and his colleagues during discussions held with the Deputy Chairman and other senior Members of the Planning Commission in January this year. We expect to get from the North Eastern Council an allocation of Rs 1.53 crores for the next financial year and the centrally sponsored schemes are expected to account for an expenditure of about Rs 70 lakhs in Mizoram. In addition, the

Border roads are expected to spend Rs 5.47 crores in Mizoram during the next financial year. All this adds upto an amount of Rs 18.77 crores which should ensure an accelerated tempo of developmental activities. My Government have succeeded in building up and strengthening the administrative infrastructure since the formation of the Union Territory and we are confident that funds which have been provided will be utilized fruitfully and for the benefit of the common people.

5. Agriculture continues to receive the highest priority in our development schemes. As against an outlay of Rs 149 lakhs during the current year we expect to spend Rs 175 lakhs during the next financial year. In addition, the N.E.C- have sanctioned schemes to the extent of Rs 67.63 lakhs for the next year. As against 3,000 hectares of land being reclaimed for permanent cultivation during the current year, it is expected that 4,000 hectares of land will be reclaimed during the next financial year. To facilitate permanent cultivation in the reclaimed lands the Agriculture Department is also undertaking construction of roads and paths to these areas. During the year 1977-78 about 50 Km of approach roads will be constructed and 300 pairs of plough-animals will be distributed at a subsidised rate. An important feature of the agriculture programme is the jhum control schemes undertaken in Chhimituipui District in Balak and Chandur valleys. An amount of Rs 16.68 lakhs will be spent on these schemes in the year 1977-78. It is highly gratifying that this backward area of Mizoram is now receiving concentrated attention.

6. Certain commendable measures have been initiated to strengthen the infrastructure for rapid development of agriculture in Mizoram. These include setting up of a Progeny Nursery, a Regional Potato Seed Farm, a Ginger Seed Multiplication Farm, a Soil Survey Organization and a Krishi Vigyan Kendra. To provide technical manpower for these facilities the Agriculture Department continued to sponsor students for technical courses. During the current year one candidate was sent for Ph.D., 4 for M.Sc(Agriculture) and 12 for B.Sc (Agriculture). During the next year another 20 candidates are proposed to be sent for higher technical education in the field of agriculture.

7. 1977 being the year in which Thingtan Famine is apprehended, special measures have been taken to deal with this problem. The Department of Agriculture has enlisted the help of Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Directorate of Plant Protection and Quarantine and North-Eastern Hill University to mount a concerted attack on this menace. Cultivators have been provided rat poison free of cost. In order to give a further incentive for the extermination

of rats Government are giving 20 paise per rat killed. Also, in areas which are likely to be affected, cultivators are being encouraged to go in for crops other than paddy. Ginger seed is being distributed on loan basis to the extent of Rs 25 lakhs which should benefit 5,000 families. In this manner an all out effort is being made to meet the threat of Thingtam. Irrigation schemes to the tune of Rs 25 lakhs will be taken up during the year 1977-78. These schemes are a necessary adjunct to our Plans for setting people on permanent cultivation.

8. Mizoram could have had a vast area under forest and its forest wealth alone would have ensured a high degree of prosperity but for the wasteful practice of burning down the vegetation for jhum cultivation. Now that an increasing number of people are being settled on permanent cultivation, efforts are being made simultaneously to bring a large area under afforestation. In the Plan Budget for 1976-77 there is a provision of Rs 27 lakhs which has been increased to Rs 30 lakhs in the next financial year. During the current year 400 hectares of land have been brought under economic plantation, 300 hectares under quick-growing species, 100 hectares under fuelwood plantation, 70 hectares under farm forestry. Similar targets have been fixed for the next year also. Special attention was paid by the Forest Department to Chhimituipui District this year. Another important activity of the Department is related to soil conservation. It has been found that people are taking enthusiastically to the idea of terracing the hill sides. The current year's target of terracing 1,200 hectares is being raised to 2,500 hectares for the next year for which an allocation of Rs 80 lakhs has been made in 1977-78. It will be seen that my Government is attaching the highest importance to this task because it is felt that terracing the hillside will put an end to the wasteful practice of shifting cultivation and will bring prosperity to the people.

9. In a backward area health services are generally inadequate. My Government have, therefore, been making strenuous efforts to improve medical facilities. During the current year it was possible to complete the new building of the Civil Hospital at Aizawl, a 50 bedded Hospital at Champhai, a 10-bedded Primary Health Centre at Hnahthial, a 10-bedded Dispensary at South Vanlaiphai, extension of Serchhip Hospital to 30 beds and functioning of 16 beds in the new building of Saiha Hospital. Altogether 118 beds have been added to the existing bed-strength of 404 in various Hospitals, dispensaries and Primary Health Centres. This is a significant development and in the coming financial year it is expected that the Primary Health Centres and Dispensaries at Biate, Lawngtlai and Bukpui will be completed. Work has also been started for the Dispensary at Darlawn and Primary Health Centre at Phaileng and Ngopa. We are continuing to feel handicapped on account of shortage of Doctors. We have, however, 47 students studying in various medical colleges and it is expected that in due course this difficulty will be overcome.

10. The activities of the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department have been expanding steadily. In the next financial year we hope to spend Rs 55 lakhs as against Rs 45 lakhs during the current financial year. The animal husbandry programme includes extension of the Cattle Breeding Farms at Selesih and Lunglei and distribution of 150 dairy cows to members of the public at 50% subsidised price. For poultry Development the Centre Hatchery at Selesih is expected to grow to its full size and meet the requirements of poultry birds in Mizoram during the next year. The Regional Pig Breeding Farm financed by the N.E.C. is functioning well and the target of 100 sow units will be achieved in the next financial year. Veterinary services continued to be handicapped for want of technical personnel. It appears that a Degree in Veterinary Science is not considered as attractive as a Degree in Engineering or Medical Science. Even so, we have sponsored 7 students for the Bachelor Degree course and 1 student for post-graduate course, to various institutions. We have also sponsored 10 students for Veterinary Field Assistant's Course.

11. In the field of education sustained efforts were made to achieve qualitative as well as quantitative improvement. The pupil-teacher ratio which was initially 46:1 has been brought to 40:1 Book Banks have been set up in Primary, Middle and High Schools for the benefit of poor students. For qualitative improvement we have now a regular flow of trained teachers from the 3 Teacher's Training Institutes. In addition, we are holding short training courses and workshops in collaboration with the National Council of Educational Research and Training, the National Institute of Languages and the Board of Secondary Education, Assam. To improve science teaching in our elementary schools we are taking advantage of a UNICEF programme for upgrading the science laboratories in the Teacher's Training Institutes at Aizawl and Lunglei. We are using text books prepared and published by the NCERT so as to ensure a uniformly high standard in education. The other notable achievements in the field of education are the setting up of the Mizoram Board of School Education, taking over the Lunglei College by the Government, strengthening of Mizoram Hindi Training Institute etc. Mizoram holds an enviable position in the country on account of its very high percentage of literacy. The need is to improve the quality of higher education for which measures mentioned here have been taken.

12. With the rising tempo of developmental activities, the Public Works Department has also expanded its working greatly. This is a servicing Department and on its activities depend the success of a large number of project. The magnitude of the

activities of this Department can be judged from the fact that during the next financial year PWD will be executing works to extent of Rs 437 lakhs in the State Plan, Rs 71 lakhs under the NEC Plan, Rs 155 on the Non-plan side, thus, making a total of Rs 663 lakhs. During the current year it was possible to complete the 19 KM long Bilkhawthlir-Saiphai road. 37 Km long Tuivawlchhuah-Suangpuilawn road. 39 Km long 3rd part Saelukhai portion of Aizawl-Thenzawl road. These roads were thrown open to vehicular traffic. It was also possible to throw open the first 22 KM portion of Kolasib-Bairabi road to vehicular traffic. Progress was also maintained on the roads under the NEC scheme, namely Kawnpui-Bairabi-Kumarghat road, Aizawl-Mamit-Gharmura road. In the next year it is proposed to step up the tempo of road construction work and throw open to traffic a number of roads which are under construction.

13. A significant achievement during the current year was the acceptance by Government of India of a scheme for construction of certain roads in our border areas. They have sanctioned execution of Phaileng-Dmagiri road and Diltlang-Parva road. A provision of Rs 50 lakhs has been made to begin construction of these roads. Similarly, the Border Roads Development Board have accepted responsibility for improving Aizawl-Silchar road and taking up the alternative link from Kawnpui to Aizawl via Sairang. All these works will be executed by the Border Roads Task Force. It is after a prolonged effort by the Government of Mizoram that these programmes have been accepted and our people will benefit greatly from these.

14. The power generation in Mizoram has increased steadily during the last two years. Starting from 570 KW in 1974-75 it went up to 1070 KW in the year 1975-76 and is expected to reach 2338 KW by the end of current financial year. During the next financial year power generation will go up to 2869 KW which marks a rapid and creditable increase in the performance of the Power and Electricity Department. The work on 66 KV line made rapid progress during the current year and it should be possible to energize the Line in another two or three months. This will enable power from the North-Eastern Electricity Grid to flow into Mizoram.

15. Mizoram being traditionally a deficit area, Government have to import large quantity of food-grains each year. This responsibility has been discharged quite effectively by the Supply Department. During the current year approximately 24,500 metric tonnes of rice, 1650 metric tonnes of sugar and 425 metric tonnes of wheat are being imported and distributed in Mizoram.

It requires a major effort to ensure that people everywhere get their supplies in time. In order to avoid wastage due to poor storage facilities, Government have undertaken the construction of permanent godowns at Kolasib and Serchhip. In the next financial year 9 more godowns will be taken up for construction.

16. The Transport Wing with a fleet of 73 vehicles in running condition was deployed for carrying essential commodities to various places. In addition, there are 40 buses plying on 40 routes. In the coming year it is proposed to add 15 more vehicles for goods transport and 5 more buses for public transport so as to provide better service to the people. A very important achievement of this Department is that it managed to push through the scheme for giving loans to 50 eligible persons for purchase of trucks. While 30% of the money will be provided by the State Bank of India in the form of loan, another 10% will be provided by the Government as seed money. This will go a long way in overcoming the shortage of transport vehicles in Mizoram.

17. In the co-operative sector, current year's budget provision of Rs 30.75 lakhs is going to be raised to Rs 38.19 lakhs in the next financial year. So far 26 Co-operative Societies have been registered and another 16 Societies are in the final stages of organization. A major emphasis has been placed on consumer co-operation under the 20 Point Economic Programme. The Mizo Wholesale Co-operative Store which is an apex of consumer cooperatives played a significant role in the public distribution system. These co-operatives have undertaken the distribution of essential commodities, controlled cloth etc., A major achievement was the setting up of the "Super Market" at Aizawl in November, 1976 with 12 different Departments dealing with all ranges of articles required by the people. The setting up of this Departmental Store has had a salutary effect on the price level prevailing in Aizawl. In the field of cooperative marketing the Apex Marketing Co-operative Societies continued to play a key role in the marketing of ginger. During the current year the Society expects to procure about 60,000 qtls. of ginger involving transactions to the tune of Rs 60 lakhs. Next year the target of procurement will be 1,25,000 qtls. of ginger.

18. The Industries Department continued to pay its primary attention to small industries while exploring the possibility of some major industries coming into Mizoram. The proposal for setting up an Industrial Estate at Kolasib is making progress and during the next year it should be possible to set up a number of small industrial units there. Industrial loans to the extent of Rs 8 lakhs were distributed to small entrepreneurs during the current year.

In addition, a sum of Rs 4 lakhs was disbursed under Rural Industries Project. Under the scheme for promotion of handloom industry, 7 Weavers' Service Centres buildings were ~~six~~ completed during the current year and 14 more such buildings are under construction. In each Weavers' Service Centre 10 persons will be given fly-shuttle looms at 50% subsidy, thus encouraging them to take to a quicker and more profitable technique of making handloom cloth. The Government Raw-material Depot continued to supply weavers with yarn at reasonable rates. A Design-Cum-Production Centre has also been set up at Lunglei for giving new designs to weavers.

19. The process of strengthening the administrative infrastructure continued during the current year. In order to improve the administrative efficiency of our officers my Government sent 18 gazetted officers to undergo various training courses in well-established Institutes all over the country. A new post of Rehabilitation Commissioner was created for paying concentrated attention to the task of rehabilitation of MNF. returnees and a senior I.A.S. officer has been posted. Detailed schemes have been prepared for rehabilitation work and recently Government of India have conveyed sanction to the extent of Rs 10 lakhs to be spent on rehabilitation during the current year. It is expected that it will now be possible to undertake this important task in a systematic and effective manner.

20. The work of the Autonomous District Councils in Chhittuipui District come in for a close look during this year. On account of repeated complaints of financial and administrative irregularities it had become necessary to appoint Commission of Enquiry into the affairs of Pawi and Chakma District Councils. On a scrutiny of the reports of these Commissions it was found that the allegations of irregularities were substantially correct. It was, therefore, decided to take over the administration of both District Councils by the Administrator of the Union Territory through Deputy Commissioner of Chhittuipui District. A sustained effort is now being made to clean up and put in order the affairs of these two District Councils. A special programme has been drawn up for intensifying the developmental activities not only in the area of these two District Councils but also in Lakher District Council area. Over and above the normal budget allocation for the current year, my Government is spending Rs 17 lakhs on special schemes in the area of all the three District Councils in Chhittuipui District. This is a welcome measure because in Mizoram this District constitutes the most backward area and it deserves special attention.

21. Mr, Speaker and Hon'ble Members, I have endeavoured to give to you a brief outline of the many-sided activities of my Government and the direction in which we are marching forward. On all accounts this has been a year of many achievements. The foundation for a more rapid progress has been laid. The administrative machinery is geared up to meet the new tasks and challenges with a marked sense of confidence. The situation now demands a sustained campaign and co-operation of all people to wipe out the backlog of economic backwardness and bring Mizoram into a new era of progress and prosperity. More than anything else, we need peace to achieve this objective. Return of peace to Mizoram will be hastened if all people assert the full weight of their will and opinion in favour of peace and against those who have been misguided into the path of violence and unlawful activities.

22. With these words, I leave you to your deliberations and wish you all success.

JAI HIND

SPEAKER: The Lt. Governor had been addressing the meeting of the House and the Copy of the Address may be laid on the table by the Secretary to the Assembly.

Motion of Thanks Notice on the Lt. Governor Address had been received from Hon'ble Mr. Lalkunga and seconded by the Hon'ble Member Mr. F. Hrangvela. And then the discussion on the Lt. Governor Address will be held tomorrow, i.e. 23rd March. And the House stands adjourned today till 10:30 tomorrow i.e. 23rd March, 1977.

D.C. PANDE
Secretary