



BUDGET SPEECH

(1972-1973)

of

Pu KHAWTINKHUMA

Finance Minister of Mizoram

In the

Legislative Assembly of Mizoram

On 20.10.1972

Mr. Speaker Sir, I rise to present before the House the Budget of the Union Territory of Mizoram for the period from 3rd May, 1972 to 31st March, 1973. This is the first year of the Union Territory of Mizoram, which came into existence on the 21st January 1972 after a long deliberation between the Prime Minister and our leaders. We know that the present status does not fully meet the aspirations of our people. However, our Prime Minister who is a better judge than us in this matter, thinks that this is the best arrangement for the time being for us in the context of the present situation obtaining in the area. We shall, therefore, have to share her views and try to make the best out of it, looking forward with hope and confidence to the time when the aspirations of our people will be fully met by raising the present status of Union Territory to a full Statehood.

As the Hon'ble Members are aware, we have been passing through the most difficult time since 1966 on account of disturbance. All the development activities had to be completely suspended. As a security measure grouping of villages was done by uprooting the villagers from their homes. As a result, the people could not continue their work of cultivation (Jhuming) as usual and were left with hardly any alternative means of earning their livelihood.

We are, therefore, now faced with a really difficult task. It is, however, very encouraging to note that the Government of India are fully aware of the peculiar circumstances prevailing in this area and the need for special care and attention in matters of development. I can, therefore, say with confidence that shortage of fund will not be allowed to stand in the way of our economic development.

Before the popular Government was installed the Government of India made a provisional grant to Mizoram for this financial year. We have been operating this tentative budget as authorized by the Administrator. The total provision in this tentative budget under Non-Plan is Rs. 8.26 crores and Rs. 2.64 crores under Plan, making a total of Rs. 10.9 crores for the current year.

2. With the popular Government installed, and with the creation of Consolidated Fund of Mizoram, Budget estimates based on the requirement of the new Government and for developmental purposes were made. The estimates were discussed with the Government of India, and I am happy to mention that the Government of India showed consideration and deep sympathy for this infant Government and backward people of this area. This was evident during discussions at Official levels and in formal meetings with Central Ministers, including the Prime Minister, with constant conscious efforts on our part; I have confidence that finance will not be a constraint for our economic development even in future. The Government of India has approved our budget estimates for Rs. 17.92 crores for the period from 3rd May 1972 to 31st March 1973. Our expenditure for the period from 1st April, 1972 to 2nd May, 1972(i.e. the period in the current financial year before we have legislature) was about Rs. 55 lakhs; making a total of Rs. 18.5 crores for the whole year. This is against the tentative provision of Rs. 10.9 crores approved for Mizoram Government earlier.

3. Largely for lack of proper organization and shortage of experienced and trained personnel, we were not in a position to prepare and finalize the detail Plan schemes in time. The Planning commission have, however, approved our Plan Schemes for Rs. 437.01 lakhs for the current year. Our present Plan Budget estimates are, however, limited to Rs. 2.75 crores for the whole year. Additional Plan Schemes for Rs. 162.01 lakhs have been approved and the fund for these additional schemes is likely to be made available to us during the current year provided we can execute plan schemes in time.

4. Mizoram is now Union Territory with Legislature. Our aim for attaining Statehood will without doubt be realized in due course. We are, however, to be prepared for it. In this context, I wish to mention that domestic receipts of our Government will have to be increased many-folds. Our Christian Missionaries taught us the principle of 'giving'. The success of Christian work in Mizoram, to me, is largely due to this principle of giving. It is true that these days

comparatively backward sections lean on more advanced people. This is so even in colonies of Welfare States. There is no doubt that the Central Government will render necessary assistance to us. But it will be for our own interest if we start learning the way of giving. Otherwise we will ever be children in the eyes of others, and we will never become mature people. Bearing the principles of equity, the government will have to raise revenues by way of levies of some sorts. And it will be for the representatives of the people and for all public leaders to educate our common mass in the right direction.

5. The Government have since created three districts, namely (1) Aizawl District with four sub-divisions (2) Lunglei District with two sub-divisions and (3) Chhimituipui District comprising the three autonomous regions of Pawi, Lakher and Chakma. In each of these districts, Deputy Commissioners have already been posted.

6. The Village Council administration is being looked after by a new Department called 'Local Administration Department' after the dissolution of the district council, which used to look after the Village Councils in the past. The Town Sanitation etc. is also being entrusted to this department.

7. Land utilization has been the concern of the government. The Revenue Department has started documentation of passes and permits on land in proper land record forms Village wise. In future, settled lands will be surveyed and mapped.

8. As the Honorable Members are painfully aware, there has been shortage of our staple food, namely, rice for some years. Disturbed condition, grouping of Villages and natural calamities are contributing factors. Our reliance on jhuming, which is the primitive method of cultivation of most uneconomic nature, will also have to be stopped gradually. With this aim, we have this year a scheme to bring 191.7 acres of land under permanent paddy cultivation under the

Crash Programme for Rural Employment and 40 acres under at her Agriculture Program. In addition cash crops cultivation is given due importance.

9. With a view to accelerating the progress of development work steps are being taken to withdraw Block Development Officers and other departmental staff now working as administrative Officers in Group Centers in order to make their services available for development work. Steps are also being taken to create suitable posts and appoint suitable persons to relieve them.

10. The Government have decided to strengthen the existing two hospitals at Aizawl and Lunglei by providing more staff such as specialists in E.N.T., Eye, Gynecology and surgery. For the purpose of equipping medical stores with medicines a sum of Rs. 16.18 lakhs has been provided. It is also intended to strengthen the existing dispensaries by providing each with additional staff, i.e. Staff Nurse, health Assistant and Grade IV staff. Extension of hospital buildings at Aizawl and Lunglei and provision of more accommodation for office and staff is being taken up. Buildings for T.B. patients will be constructed at Durtlang very soon. As it is difficult to build permanent houses, Government propose to provide temporary buildings for dispensaries and doctors in 25 places and post additional staff in these dispensaries. The hospitals will also be provided with more ambulance vans.

11. Development of dairy, pig and poultry farming is being intensified for which efforts are being made to establish a departmental 'Feed Mill – cum-Mixing Plant' in the Union Territory, only 10 Rural Veterinary Aid Centres have their buildings. Five of such buildings will be taken up during this current year.

Poultry bird distribution programme at 75 percent subsidy is not much of a success in view of high mortality on transit by road. To remove this, it is proposed to bring birds from outside Assam by air up to Silchar or Tuirial.

12. The Soil Conservation Department under Assam had started some work. Our emphasis from now on will be Cash Crop Cultivation as one of the methods of Soil Conservation. The measures are intended to finally stop jhum cultivation, which goes directly against the aim of soil conservation. Crops Demonstration Centers will be set up as a measure to show in practice to the jhum cultivators the possibility of going in for permanent cultivation of Cash crops as an alternative employment.

13. The Industrial Training Institute Aijal now a guest Institute at Srikona near Silchar will be shifted to Mizoram; and pending construction of buildings, the Institute will be accommodated even in a bared house.

14. In the Agricultural sector, stress is laid on an all round development for Food production so as to bring about Green Revolution in the Territory. With this end in view, the Agriculture Department will intensify various schemes like introduction of high yielding varieties of crops, potato development, vegetable development, sugarcane development, horticultural development, land reclamation, minor irrigation, fertilizer distribution, seed farm and nurseries and fruit processing. Under the seed farm scheme, two large farms at Thenzawl and Thingdawl have been established while small seed nurseries at Chite and Sihphir (Aizawl) and Dubinallah (lunglei) for multiplication and distribution of quality seeds have been doing well.

To solve the problem or market difficulty for surplus fruit produce, fruit processing factory has been established at Vairengte where production of Pineapple Squash has started, and production of Jam and Jelly would also be taken up soon.

Mention may also be made that the Government of Mizoram is very much aware of the plight of the Ginger growers due to the slump in price of ginger. A price support scheme is now

being initiated so as to enable the Ginger growers to dispose off their product with marginal profit.

15. Directorate of Information, Public Relations and Tourism has been established. This directorate will also look after printing and publication works of the Government, as there is no separate department of Printing & Stationery. As part of the publicity work, the department has been taking up printing and publication work of 'Mizo News Bulletin', 'Tunlai Chanchin' at Aizawl, 'Khawvel' at Lunglei, 'Kaladan' at Saiha and 'Mizoram Gazette' at Aizawl and other publicity pamphlets.

In view of the increasing public demand for information and publicity, provisions have been made to strengthen the department with better equipments. It is proposed to start Information Centers at 20 important places.

In order to foster a spirit of partnership and to promote emotional integration and national awareness, conducted tours will be arranged for village leaders, students, social workers, writers, artists and artisans. Although Mizoram has potentialities for the development of tourism, a beginning is yet to be made in this respect. A small provision is made for making a survey of potentialities of the development of tourism.

16. With the formation of Mizoram as Union Territory the necessity for construction of various buildings to house the Secretariat and other Government offices and the Assembly Hall has arisen. Apart from these, residential accommodations for the Ministers, Members of the Assembly and Government officers have also to be built on a priority basis. But unfortunately due to acute scarcity of land for building construction, it has not been possible to finalize the sites for the Secretariat buildings, Assembly Hall and other buildings.

At present large portions of the land in the central portion of the town is occupied by the Assam Rifles who have been here for several decades. Efforts are being made to find an alternative location for the Assam Rifles outside the town area and a Committee has been set up to inspect various sites and recommend suitable sites for the approval of the Government. It is hoped that very soon a decision would be taken about the alternative site for them. For the time being, the Secretariat and other offices have to be accommodated in temporary buildings in the available space.

During the current year, the construction program has to be on a limited scale due to the fact that the PWD which has to shoulder the immense task of meeting the needs of the Union Territory is required to be re-organized and strengthened and this is bound to take some time. The activities of the PWD in various sectors have therefore to be limited, to its capacity to deliver the goods. Besides land for constructions is not readily available and materials and machinery for construction have also to be procured from outside from various parts of India, along the difficult and uncertain route through Assam. With the re-organization and strengthening of the PWD to be completed during this year, it is expected that the activities under various sectors of construction will be greatly stepped up next year.

17. Supply of safe and adequate drinking water to the population is one of the basic responsibilities of the government and top priority has therefore been given by the Government to finalized the Water Supply Schemes for the towns and villages as quickly as possible and to execute them expeditiously. It is our objective to provide drinking water to all the Group Centers and major villages by the end of the Fifth Five Year Plan (1978-1979). In case of isolated and small villages, the scheme will be executed under Block Development Schemes.

In the current year a provision of Rs. 34.42 lakhs under plan has been made to meet the cost of construction and maintenance of the schemes. The Aizawl water supply Scheme has been partly completed and water is already being supplied to large sections of the population.

The work of construction of the distribution lines is expected to be completed by the end of this year. The scheme will be completed when electricity driven pumps are provided in place of the present Diesel pumps now operated, since the cost of operation of diesel Pump is very high. This will, however, depend on completion of the work of bringing power to Aizawl from Dulapcherra in Assam by 66 KV line which is expected to be completed by the end of 1973.

A part from Aizawl Water Supply, it is proposed to take up works on the water schemes in the following major Group Centers and towns.

- 1.Kolasib
- 2.Saiha
- 3.Serchhip
- 4.North Lokicherra
- 5.Lunglei

Besides these, works on 8 minor Group Centers are nearing completion. Water Supply Schemes have been made for six other villages.

18. At present all the works connected with Generation and distribution of electricity are being done by Assam State Electricity Board. In due course a separate department or board will be set up under this Government which will take over the work of Assam State Electricity Board for execution of various schemes. The matter of setting up this organization is under consideration of Government. In the current year's budget, under plan scheme, a sum of Rs. 54.98 lakhs has been provided.

19. Investigation of the possibilities of using Daleswar (tlawng) and Kolodyne rivers for the purpose of Inland Water Transport was done by one sub-division located at Silchar under the control of Assam Government. This unit is expected to be transferred to this Government shortly after which the activities will be expended and prosper schemes will be finalized based on data

available for approval by Planning Commission. In the budget a small provision is made for the establishment expenditure of the investigation sub-division and for removal of some obstruction in Daleswar River.

20. The main Aizawl Bazar was destroyed by fire in 1966. No assistance for reconstruction and rehabilitation could come forth all these years. The Government of India has not agreed to provide Rs. 75 lakhs as loans for the purpose. There is also a provision of Rs. 20 lakhs as loans for the purpose. There is also a provision of Rs. 20 lakhs as housing loan to Public. It is expected that the town will present better appearance and a number of people will be rehabilitated when these loans will be utilised.

The Government consider that economic development in Mizoram can be accelerated if industrial development also is given due importance. The Agriculture product will have to be processed. Items for local consumption can also be manufactured. The government intends to invite the expert services from Council of Scientific and Industrial Research. Preliminary steps have been taken on this line. In the current year, it is proposed to start some industries not requiring high technology. There is a proposal in the budget to give loans for 14 Rice Hullers and 8 Oil Expellers. It is also intended to give other Industrial Loans for the Schemes, which may be found feasible on economic and technical ground, and there is a budget provision of about 9 lakhs in the current year's budget for this purpose. I may also mention that the erstwhile Mizo District Council employed one Paper Consultant to study the feasibility of starting Paper Pulp Industry. This report has been submitted and it is under study.

It is a matter of pride that inspite of past deficiencies, Mizoram has succeeded in achieving a fairly high percentage of literacy namely 50.9. This does not, however, allow us to remain complacent in our efforts to attain a much higher percentage of literacy and various steps have been taken to gear up the whole machinery to meet the challenge. The much-needed Directorate of Education has been installed and the services of a mature and experienced officer

has already been secured for the post of the Director of Education. As a result, the past inadequacies due to dependence on Shillong for direction, guidance and finances have been overcome to a very large extent.

Besides provincialising quite a few non-Government Middle and High Schools, the government have taken steps to bring many of the other deserving ones within the ambit of the deficit system of grants-in-aid and to provide them with some non-recurring grants for improvement of their physical plants, furniture and teaching aid etc. the honorable members will, I am sure, appreciate the difficulties inherent in the task of restructuring education in this newly born territory and allow sufficient time to the government to achieve tangible results. I would, however, like to assure them that the government will leave no stone unturned to attain higher and higher levels of achievement in the field of education. In this connection, I would like to submit most humbly that it is not so much the quantitative expansion, which we need at the various stages of education today as an all-out effort to achieve qualitative improvement therein. Teaching of Science and Mathematics has unfortunately been badly neglected till now both at the school and College stages. I am happy to announce before this August house that a Pilot Project for improvement of Science teaching in the elementary schools is being taken up in collaboration with the UNICEF and NCERT. The Government of India has already given their clearance for under-taking this project and it is hoped that by the end of March 1973 functional operation of the project will start.

The Government also has decided to start Science Course in the P.M. Govt. College, Aizawl College, Aizawl with effect from the commencement of the ensuing academic session and for this purpose, construction of laboratory buildings in the college campus is already under the active operational steps of the Public Works Department. The Non-government College at Lunglei has also started Science class this year and the Government has taken steps to provide some financial support for this purpose.

The pupil-teacher ratio in our primary schools is at present extremely unsatisfactory and the Government have decided to appoint 200 additional Primary School teachers this year with a view to improve the situation. It is hoped that the pupil-teacher ratio will be brought to about 1.40 as a result of this measure. A scheme has also been taken up to provide a good number of pre-matric boarding-house stipend (hostel subsidies) to enable poor and deserving students to continue their studies unhampered.

It is unfortunate that our primary school teachers are, till now, mostly untrained. Besides, they are also rather deficient academically, most of them having qualification as low as M.E. standard. To overcome their academic deficiencies as far as possible as also to provide them with more adequate pedagogic competence the present primary school teachers training course of one-year duration is being replaced by a more comprehensive training course covering a period of two years.

Funds have also been provided in the budget for various youth activities like education excursions, sports, games etc. and a scheme has been taken up in the State plan for organization of coaching in sports, games, athletics etc. It is hoped that our boys and girls, who have inherent talents in sports and games will be able to make a distinctive mark through this measure.

With these words, Sir, I conclude and I beg your leave now to present the Budget Estimates for the year 1972-1973 i.e., (3.5.72 to 31.3.73).

JAI HIND

