

2. It is a matter of satisfaction that the overall law and order situation in the State remains peaceful. I must congratulate the people of Mizoram for maintaining peace and harmony even in the face of extreme pressures. Attempts made by insurgents operating from neighbouring States as well as from across the international border with Bangladesh and Myanmar to disturb our hard-earned peace have been dealt with effectively and efficiently by law enforcement agencies of the State. To effectively check infiltration and to efficiently handle exigencies of law and order, my Government has been making efforts to strengthen the law and order machinery of the State Government by providing it with modern and sophisticated equipment, weaponry and other inputs required for effective policing. I am happy to inform you that, towards this end, the Govt. of India has sanctioned one additional battalion of the India Reserve Police and personnel for this new Police Force are being recruited. The raising of this new battalion will undoubtedly go a long way in improving the shortage of Police Force in the State.

3. I am also happy to say that the availability of foodgrains and other essential commodities in the State have been generally satisfactory. My Government will continue to make efforts to streamline the Public Distribution System to ensure easy availability of essential commodities to the people of the State.

4. There has been improvement in the financial position of the State. The State has not even availed of Ways and Means Advance since July, 2000. This significant improvement is mainly due to release of Peace Bonus of Rs. 182.45 crore by Government of India and also due to the Eleventh Finance Commission. Realising the necessity of further improving the overall financial position of the State, my Government has continued to make efforts to generate additional resources and to curtail Non-Plan expenditures. The State has also constituted the Mizoram Financial Reforms Committee to streamline the existing financial system of the Government.

5. I would like to share with you my heartfelt gratitude to the Central Government for writing off the U.T period loan of Rs.37.93 crore which has been lying outstanding against the Government of Mizoram. This positive decision of the Central Government is a great relief to the State of Mizoram.

6. The Planning Commission has approved an allocation of Rs.401.26 crore for the Annual Plan 2000-01. Apart from the normal State Plan Fund, Mizoram Government con-

tinues to receive additional fund from Non-Lapsable Pool of Central Resources for implementing various projects in the State.

7. Achieving self-sufficiency in the production of foodgrains and providing adequate opportunities for more gainful employment through agricultural and horticultural development programmes remains the top priority of my Government. The gradual shift towards mechanised farming for optimum utilisation of the State's good potential for wet rice cultivation is progressing well with positive results. Emphasis is now laid on development of cash crops and fruits of high market value, on development of infrastructure like link roads, water harvesting facilities and minor irrigation for increased production and to enable farmers to fetch remunerative prices for their produces.

8. Honourable Members are aware that the power supply in the State is inadequate. My Government has continued to make sincere efforts towards improving this situation. Recently, the Central Government has released Rs.10.00 crore for improving transmission and distribution of power within Aizawl city. This will improve the power situation in the city to a certain extent. Techno-Economic clearance for 80 MW capacity Bairabi Hydel Project has already been obtained and necessary Environment and Forest clearances are also expected soon. The Government of India has also provided Rs.22.05 crore for implementation of 12 MW capacity Serlui 'B' Hydel Project.

9. My Government continues to implement various schemes for development of small and medium towns, market infrastructure, housing and sanitation. For development of market infrastructure, Government of India has agreed to provide Rs.15.00 crore, out of which, Rs.5.00 crore has already been released to the State as first instalment for development of markets at several identified locations in the State.

10. My Government has assigned priority to the development of border trade. Sincere efforts have been made towards development of border - trade facilities at Tlabung on the Indo-Bangladesh border and at Zokhawthar on the Indo-Myanmar border. The Government of India has also supported our endeavour in this regard by initially providing Rs. 1.84 crore and Rs.2.00 crore respectively for Tlabung and Zokhawthar. It is envisaged that these facilities will provide avenues for marketing agro-forest and other produces of the State across the international borders-

11. My Government is keenly aware of the potential and the vital role that development of industries can play for rapid economic development and for providing employment opportunities to the people, particularly to the educated youth. My Government has, therefore, also taken signifi-

cant steps towards development of industrial activities in the State. A new Industrial Policy, 2000 has recently been approved. A new Information Technology (IT) Policy and Bamboo Policy are also on the anvil. The Government of India has provided Rs.2.54 crore out of the approved outlay of Rs. 15.00 crore for the Industrial Growth Centre at Luangmual. Detailed Project Report for setting up an Export Promotion Industrial Park at Lengte with 100% Central assistance is under preparation. Very recently, the Planning Commission has also released Rs.1.00 crore as first instalment for development of bamboo processing unit at Sairang. Realising the IT potential of the State, my Government continues to promote and encourage computer education as part of its endeavour to bring IT to the masses. Under the programme of opening of Community Information Centres (CICs) in all the 22 Rural Development Blocks and 5 new District Headquarters, 2 CICs at Thing-sulthliah and Aibawk are ready for commissioning. The Ministry of Information Technology, Government of India has extended support to our endeavour towards development of IT in the State. Government of Mizoram has already received consignments of computers from Government of India for installation of a network system within the Mizoram Secretariat. I may also mention that efforts are on to establish Computer Training Centres for School Children in all the District Headquarters under the award of the Eleventh Finance Commission.

12. In our continuous endeavour towards the development of roads and buildings infrastructure, the State PWD has undertaken the schemes of development of new Raj Bhavan and other buildings under State Capital Project on 102 acres of land vacated by Assam Rifles at Khatla. Under Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana (PMGY), construction of Rural Roads to provide all-weather connectivity to the villages of Mizoram is being undertaken with an outlay of Rs. 20.00 crore during the current year. The Greater Aizawl Water Supply Phase-II is already underway and this scheme will provide significant relief to the ever-burgeoning population of Aizawl city and its outskirts. Execution of Greater Champhai Water Supply Scheme is also in progress with Rs. 5.00 crore so far released by the Government of India under Non-Lapsable Pool of Central Resources. Under Rural Water Supply Programme, my Government is continuing augmentation of water supplies to cover more habitations.

13. My Government continues to attach great importance to the protection of the environment. The novel programme of Green Mizoram launched by my Government in 1999 has taken roots and ensured the people's participation in the preservation of our eco-system. Concrete steps have been taken for implementation of Bamboo Plantation Scheme and establishment of a Bamboo Research Institute.

14. My Government shall continue to intensify its efforts to tackle social evils and ensure effective imple-

mentation of the Total Prohibition Act with the active participation of Non-Government Organisations and the churches.

15. My Government continues to execute various Rural Development Programmes through 22 Rural Development Blocks and District Rural Development Agencies (DRDAs). Five new DRDAs have recently been established in the newly created Districts of Mizoram and these DRDAs will contribute significantly towards strengthening the Rural Development infrastructure in Mizoram. Under the new programme of PMGY, 2098 families will be given cash assistance of Rs.22,000/- per family for construction of dwelling houses and 1149 families will also be assisted for upgradation of their existing buildings at the unit-cost of Rs.10,000/- each.

16. Livestock Development Programmes shall continue to receive the priority of my Government as it is of special significance to the weaker sections of society. Towards this end, our main thrust has been on the implementation of 2 (two) projects funded from the Non-Lapsable pool of Central Resources. Rs. 1.00 crore each has been released for implementation of these two projects, namely, establishment of a 50-ton capacity Animal Feed Plant at Tanhril and Integrated Piggery Development Project at Kawlkulh during the current year.

17. Realising the potentialities of Tourism in Mizoram, emphasis has been laid on development of infrastructure like Tourist Lodges and Cafeteria at various places in the State. The Eleventh Finance Commission's award of Rs.2.00 crore for development of Tourist Information Centres at Guwahati, Calcutta and New Delhi will also strengthen our efforts towards development of Tourism in the State.

18. Apart from providing qualitative health services to the people, my Government has laid emphasis on building up the necessary medical infrastructure under various schemes. Construction of State Referral Hospital at Fal-kawn has been taken up by the State FWD, for which, the Government of India has already released Rs.15.00 crore. A CT scan is being installed at the Civil Hospital, Aizawl to improve its diagnostic facilities.

19. Realising the importance of the elementary education, my Government has undertaken development of building infrastructure. For this purpose, the Government of India has also extended its support by providing financial assistance of Rs.21.00 crore from the Non-Lapsable Pool of Central Resources, out of which, Rs.10.50 crore has already been released. From the next academic session, Computer Education will be introduced as a subject in Middle and High Schools. English will also be introduced as a subject in Primary Schools from the next

academic session. For improvement of technical education, Women Polytechnic at Aizawl and Mizoram Polytechnic at Lunglei are being upgraded with World Bank assistance of Rs.35.00 crore. Zirtiri Residential Science College has also become operational.

20. My Government continues to assist the Autonomous District Councils in discharging their vital role in development of the District Council areas. For the first time, the State Government has extended the facilities of availing HUDCO housing loan to the employees of the District Councils.

21. My Government will continue to encourage and promote sports and youth activities. Emphasis will continue to be laid on development of sports infrastructure and facilities in the State. 2 new District Sports Offices have been opened in April, 2000 at Champhai and Kolasib. I am happy to inform you that our young boys and girls have consistently performed well in various sports and youth activities, tournaments, camps and championship meets at the national level, winning coveted laurels for the State. Efforts will be made to motivate and encourage them to achieve even greater heights.

22. Efforts will continue to be made to improve the public transport system. New bus services have been started on the Aizawl-Guwahati and Saiha -Bualpui(Ng) routes. To ease traffic congestion and regulate parking of vehicles in Aizawl city, the Mizoram Regulation and Control of Vehicle Parking Rules, 2000 have been promulgated.

23. Honourable Members will recall that in the address to this august House on 15th March, 2000, it had been mentioned that the priorities of my Government have been set and that the groundwork has been laid for a number of developmental projects which collectively have the potential of transforming the economy of Mizoram. I am happy to note that we have been making steady progress in implementing these developmental projects. I am confident that efforts will be intensified for further accelerated progress in these endeavours for sustained development and poverty alleviation.

24. I have highlighted only a few major aspects and a broad outline of my Government's endeavours to fulfil its commitments. I am sure that these issues will be discussed in greater details during the course of this Session.

25. I wish your deliberations all success.

Ka lawm e,
Jai Hind.

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