

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 7th & BUDGET SESSION OF THE
MIZORAM LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY HELD AT THE ASSEMBLY
HALL FROM 11TH MARCH, 1975 TO 1ST APRIL, 1975

1st Sitting on 11th March, 1975 at 11:00 A.M.

P R E S E N T

Pu Hiphei, Dy. Speaker in the Chair. Chief Minister,
six Ministers and 24 Members.

L.G. SPEECH

My Speaker and Hon'ble Members,

I am very happy to extend to you all a warm welcome to this Fourth Budget Session of the Assembly. We are meeting today in the tragic back-drop of the recent brutal assassination of three brave Police-officers at the hands of the underground members of the M.N.F. Shri G.S. Arya, the late Inspector-General of Police, and the other two officers, Sarvashri L.B.Sewa and K.Panchapagesan, who have laid down their lives in the highest tradition of their services in the cause of restoration of peace and order in this region, deserve our richest tribute. This crime has been widely condemned and has moved the hearts and minds of all peace-loving citizens both in Mizoram and elsewhere in the country. This calls for good deal of heart-searching and I shall revert to it later.

2. Government have been obliged to postpone elections to Village Councils due to deterioration in the law and order situation. As the Assembly was not in session it became necessary for me promulgate an Ordinance to amend the Village Council Act enabling Government to extend the life of the existing Village Councils for a further period of six months with effect from 19th November, 1974. It is proposed to introduce the Lushai Hills Districts (Village Councils) (Amendment) Bill, 1975 in this session to replace the said Ordinance.

3. Inflationary pressures continued throughout the year 1974 causing considerably strain and stress to our national economy. Although this has been a world-wide phenomenon, failure of Kharif crop in many parts of the country added to our difficulties. However, it appears that the worst is over. Prices of several raw materials and essential commodities are showing downward trends and prospects of a good Rabi harvest are bright. Industrial production has also picked up during the last few months and our exports figures have shown an unprecedented increase. The Union Minister of Finance has recently presented a bold and promising budget with a record of plan expenditure aimed at boosting up both agricultural and Industrial production. I think, the Hon'ble Members

will share my hope and confidence that the present inflationary trend will be checked successfully.

4. The Planning Commission have made a tentative allotment of Rs. 45.59 crores for Mizoram during the Fifth Five Year Plan. The plan allocation for current year was Rs. 6.90 crores. For 1975-76 the allocation has been raised to Rs. 7.25 crores in the State sector and in addition about Rs. 45 lakhs will be available under Centrally sponsored schemes. The expected outlay for Mizoram under the regional plans of the North-Eastern Council for 1975-76 is Rs. 1.11 crores against Rs. 90 lakhs made available in 1974-75. The new schemes included in these plans are mainly in the field of road construction, jhum control and agricultural research programmes, and survey projects for generation of power and production of Oak-Tussar. While education, health services, water supply schemes and other social services have been fully catered for in the development plan, government have deemed it fit to lay emphasis on building up of infrastructure, such as roads, communication, electricity and trained manpower. To achieve this end, it has been decided to strengthen the planning machinery at the headquarters. A Development Committee under the Chairmanship of each Deputy Commissioner has been set up, to be followed by Block-level Committees, co-ordinating the development work of all Government agencies operating in the field. It will be your privilege to consider at length the various plan schemes and evaluate their impact during the course of budget discussion. However, I propose to mention some of the important developmental activities of my Government.

5. The most significant development has been the creation of 20 new Community Development Blocks. To augment the funds available for these Blocks under the Plan, Government have decided to bear bulk of administrative expenditure from Non-Plan side of the budget. To achieve this the offices of the Block Development Officers have been combined with Administrative Officers and post of 10 Senior Gramsevaks and 100 Gramsevaks have been transferred to the Agriculture Department. Special care has, however, have been taken to integrate the functional control over field staff by keeping the Community Development Blocks as the organizational base for all types of schemes covering social education, agriculture extension programme, land reclamation, animal husbandry and Veterinary, health and rural sanitation as well as communication. I am particularly happy to note that the Community Development programme has already given to the people 15 Community Halls and 17 play-grounds during this year, while another 10 Community Halls and 20 play-grounds are going to be constructed during 1975-76. The Construction of jeepable roads and inter-village paths also figures prominently in the Community Development programme. The corner stone of rural development programmes must, however, remains as before land reclamation, jhum control,

terracing and improved methods of cultivation. The resources of Agriculture and Soil Conservation Departments have been channelised in this direction and physical targets are being set for each Community Development Block, which will facilitate evaluation of the results from time to time. Besides various schemes of subsidy in cash as well as in kind, the Agriculture Department will also give loans for horticulture. Steps have already been taken with the assistance of Community Development staff to collect village-wise statistical information regarding the land under wet rice cultivation, under cash crops, land suitable for reclamation and other data relevant for formulating an area development plan.

6. Marketing of produce from jhums, such as ginger, sessamum, needs help and regulation. In this field the Apex Marketing Society and NAFED have already made the cultivation of ginger profitable. It is hoped that during the next year it will be possible to organise marketing of other commercial crops as well.

7. The regional scheme for a Pig Breeding Farm has made good progress and its full impact will be felt during this year. During the year 1974-75, 3 new State Veterinary Dispensaries and 7 Rural Animal Husbandry Centres have been set up. The Milk supply Scheme for Aizawl has also been boosted up with the installation of a Dairy Plan at Zemabawk.

8. Forests in Mizoram have been denuded to a large extent because of shifting cultivation on which 80% of the population depends for its livelihood. Even the reserve forest could not escape destruction and the entire country side wears a dilapidated look. It is an uphill task to re-clothe the barren hills of Mizoram with forest cover. The working of the Soil Conservation and Forest Departments is integrated under a common Director and the Department have a fairly ambitious programme duly backed by suitable plan provisions. However, their functioning is greatly handicapped in the absence of trained personnel both in the headquarters as well as in the field. The Government have taken steps to train the staff of various levels, but this will take time. In the meanwhile, it appears necessary to obtain the service of some experienced staff from outside so as to prepare the working plan and assess the forest resources. My Government are aware of the crucial importance of re-generating the forests in the context of rural development and additional revenues.

9. The Medical and Family Planning Department has received liberal allocation of funds both under State Plan and Centrally sponsored schemes. However, it has not been possible for the Government to provide effective health services up to acute health centres.

effective health services due to acute dearth of doctors, particularly specialists, and para-medical staff like pharmacists, radiographers and laboratory technicians etc. My Government have gone all-out in assisting the study of these subjects and 47 stipendiaries are presently in various Medical Colleges, while 9 others are undergoing pharmacist's course and another 15 are receiving training in Nursing. In the meanwhile, a beginning has been made with the construction of hospitals, Primary Health Centres, T.B. Hospitals and Dispensaries.

10. In the field of education it has been possible to achieve sustained improvement both qualitatively during the current year. There has been substantial increase in enrolment figure of students at all stages. The pupil-teacher ratio also has been brought to a very satisfactory figure both in schools and colleges. It is gratifying to note that with the funds given by Government, the Managing Committees of the non-Government institutions have now better buildings with fairly good furniture, teaching aids and other equipments than before.

The Department has organised important seminars and training course for improving the work efficiency of the teachers. One Under-Graduate Teachers' Training Institution has been started this year at Lunglei and a Graduate Teachers' Training Institution with Bachelor of Education course is expected to start functioning at Aizawl before the close of this financial year.

The assurance given previously to shift the Industrial Training Institute, which has been functioning as a guest institution at Srikona, Silchar, to its new location at Aizawl is also on its way to fulfilment.

Great importance continues to be attached to adult literacy and as many as 2,000 persons within the age group of 15-45 have been benefitted during the current year. It is hoped that the literacy figure for Mizoram shall be raised to 62% by the close of the Fifth Five Year Plan.

In the field of social welfare a landmark has been established by introducing a social security measure in the shape of giving subsistence allowance at the rate of Rs.30/- per month to 100 old and deserving poor people above the age of sixty-five.

During the current year the Planning Commission allocated Rs. 39 lakhs for general education including art and culture, tribal research and social welfare, which is going to be utilized fully as per approved plan schemes. The Planning Commission have approved an allocation of Rs. 44 lakhs against the same

items for 1975-76, and it is hoped that the tempo of activities in these fields will be geared up further in the coming year.

11. It is gratifying to note that Bilkhawthlir-Buhchangphai Road started at the time of Assam Government has been completed and opened for traffic. At the same time, Khawzawl-Lungdar Road undertaken by the Public Works Department after Mizoram became Union Territory as a 16 feet road for about 72 Kms. is almost complete. Public Works Department have started working on 10 different roads included in the Fifth Plan beside the 2 regional roads included in the North-Eastern Council Plan. During the next year it is proposed to complete the entire length of Khawzawl -Lungdar Road, about 10 Kms. on Aizawl-Thenzawl-Lunglei Road, Kolasib to Bairabi on the Kolasib-Lokicherra Road and to open them for traffic with Bailey bridges instead of suspension bridges.

12. The construction of 66 K.V. Line from Silchar to Aizawl and other schemes for power generation have made further progress. As things stand, all the assets and liabilities created by the Assam State Electricity Board for Mizoram along with responsibility for execution and maintenance of electricity schemes will pass over to this Government on the 20th of this month. It is expected to complete the organization of Power Department in 1975-76 comprising one Electrical Circle and two Electrical Divisions with a nucleus staff for investigation as well.

We are, thus, going to enter a new era in the field of power development with hope and confidence in our capability to run the show and implement the development programmes in this field expeditiously with the help of the Government of India.

13. The Aizawl Water Supply is still not in a position to function as per original scheme mainly due to want of electric power. The Treatment Plant also remains to be completed and till then the crude method of chlorination continues to be in use. However, efforts are being made to get over these difficulties and improve the water supply in the Capital. In the rural areas the existing schemes for water supply by pumping will be continued and completed, but in other cases it has been decided to concentrate on taking water by gravitation. Further, a new scheme of developing and improving village water supply sources by constructing storage tanks has been approved by the Planning Commission. This new scheme is expected to go a long way in giving stable water supply to the villages.

14. The maintenance of supplies during the last year has been an up-hill task due to shortage of food in the country, strike in the railways as well as the Food Corporation of India and the reluctance of transporters in plying between Silchar and Aizawl after the "Quit Mizoram" notice served on the non-Mizos by the underground M.N.F. However, Government have fortunately provided dynamic leadership in this field and successfully maintained the supply of essential commodities at a satisfactory level by getting over all such hurdles. Recently, the Government of India have stepped up the monthly allotment of rice from 2,000 metric-tonnes to 2,500 metric-tonnes since the last December. It has, thus, been possible to raise the weekly quota to 3Kgs. per adult in the villages of south Mizoram, which are suffering from food shortage due to damage of the last crop by rats on a large-scale. If the present scale of monthly allotment of rice is maintained by the Government of India, Government expects to make this higher scale of 3 Kgs. per adult per week applicable in the whole of Mizoram. While in 1973-74 the people of Mizoram received only 10,000 bags of cement and no G.C.I. Sheets, it has been possible to make available to them during the current year 25,800 bags of cement and 4,015 bundles of G.C.I. Sheets so far. As transportation charges for these bulk items upto Lunglei and Lawngtlai become almost prohibitive, Government have fixed a full price uniformly for cement and G.C.I. sheets at all District headquarters, viz Aizawl, Lunglei and in case of Chhimituipui District, Lawngtlai.

Taking a long-term view, special attention has been paid by the Government for toning up the Administration of Supply department. A large number of cases of shortage in carriage contract and misappropriation of sale proceeds by the Administrative Officers and Storekeepers have been detected and appropriate action is being taken under the law against all such offenders. Government have also constituted a high-level Enquiry Committee for going into huge transit losses, godown losses and other shortages during the previous two years. Steps are also being taken to eradicate the evil of ghost ration cards and ration units in Aizawl and Lunglei towns with the co-operation of Village Council Presidents and other representative organisations. It is also proposed to recognize the working of the Supply Department by setting up District Supply Office at Aizawl and Lunglei, which will function under the general supervision of the Deputy Commissioner and be responsible for planning, movement, storage, distribution and accounting of supplies within the District.

The State Transport has acquired stability and reputation for regular efficient bus service on six routes. It is proposed to ass Silchar-Lokicherra Route as soon as the road and bridges are repaired, and also add to the existing fleet of buses. My Government have taken a policy decision for converting the Mizoram State Transport into a Corporation, and it is expected to complete the necessary formalities in this behalf in the course of next few months.

The Railway Out-Agency at Aizawl for both goods and passenger traffic is expected to start functioning next month as all necessary formalities in this regard have been completed and four luggae vans have been acquired.

The Government have also decided to establish a central workshop to cater to the need for repair and maintenance of all Government vehicles. The detailed scheme for this important project is being prepared by Committee of officials appointed for this purpose.

15. As I have already mentioned, the crop last year has suffered considerable damage in certain pockets of southern Mizoram due to flowering of bamboos, known in local parlance as "Thingtam". As per latest report received in 15 villages of Lunglei District and in 19 villages of Chhimituipui District the crop has been damaged to the extent of 66% and 75% respectively. Preventive measures were taken by the Government in time by way of rushing pesticides etc., but the magnitude of the problem rendered this infructuous. Efforts are being made to get experts from Delhi to study the problem so that the preventive measures may be organized on a more effective scale during the next season. In the meanwhile, relief has been organised through Employment Generation Scheme funds and increased allocations made for Lunglei and Chhimituipui Districts. A proposal for sanction of additional funds during the current as well as next financial year under the Employment Generation Scheme for providing greater relief to the people in the affected villages has been submitted to the Government of India recently.

16. It has also been possible during the current year to finalize the scrutiny of more than 100 applications from Government servants for house building advance under the Central Rules, pending the formulation of our own set of rules. With the disbursement of these advances, for which a budget provision of Rs. 9 lakhs exists in the current year, the housing problem is expected to ease, particularly in the Capital, where most of the applicants own their plots.

17. The re-organization of District administration is expected to be completed shortly with the creation of six Sub-Divisions, which has been held up for two reasons, viz, boundary demarcation and sanction of staff. While the first hurdle has since been removed, the proposal for sanction of staff is being pursued with the Government of India.

18. Another important land-mark in the organization of services under this new Government crossed during the current year has been the formulation of service rules and final allocation of 2,037 Class IV, 2,473 Class III, 93 Class-II Class-I erstwhile officials of the Government of Assam to Mizoram under the North-Eastern Areas (Re-organisation) Act, 1971. It is expected to constitute formally the various service cadres in the coming year and remove uncertainty from the minds of Government employees about their regular appointment, promotions and position by holding a series of meetings of the Selection Boards constituted by the Government of India.

It is also a matter of great satisfaction that the Government conducted successfully during the previous year the first competitive examination for Class-II civil posts and as many as 32 successful candidates have been offered such appointment upto date from the merit list prepared on this basis. My Government have also been availing of various training facilities offered by the Government of India, and 5 Indian Administrative Service and Allied Service Officers, 4 State Civil Service Officers and 3 other Departmental officers and 21 Assistants have been deputed for undergoing different training courses so far.

However, there is one matter of concern to the Government. A recent survey conducted by the Appointment Department has revealed that as many as 314 posts have been lying vacant for a long time. Out of these 179 are technical posts., 114 are executive posts, while 21 are ministerial. It will be noticed that the unfilled vacancies fall mainly in the supervisory and technical category for which suitable persons are not available locally. My Government have been making all possible efforts to attract experienced personnel from outside on deputation till our own cadre officers are ready to take up such positions. However, it has not been possible to attract these much-needed personnel only because of the disturbed conditions charged with violence prevailing in the Territory. It is obvious that in the absence of experienced and trained supervisory staff, there is every possibility of Government expenditure going waste and the people not getting the full value of the money spent by the Government for their welfare.

19. The Hon'ble Members will recall that due to the in-adequacy of Employment Exchanges and the large-scales recruitment, which had to be carried out in the initial of Union Territory Administration, the Government had to devise special procedure for recruitment. Now since the initial phase of setting up the Government has been achieved and service rules also framed, my Government have reviewed the policy and decided to enforce the Employment Exchange (Compulsory Notification of Vacancies) Act also in respect of Government vacancies. An Employment Exchange is also being opened at Saiha in addition to the existing ones at Aizawl and Lunglei. The Government of India have also approved the setting up of a Directorate for the Employment Exchanges and the machinery for registration of unemployed persons in the Employment Exchanges is being stream-lined.

20. Before I revert to law and order. I would like to draw your attention to the mounting Non-Plan expenditure. On the revenue account the Revised Estimates for 1974-75 show an increase of Rs. 2.19 crores, while it is further going up by another Rs. 1.25 crores or so in the Budget Estimates for 1975-76.

Bulk of this increase is on account of interim relief and dearness allowances at Central scales. Once the employes of Mizoram are brought on Central pay-scale, for which presently a Committee is working, the committed Non-Plan expenditure on salaries and allowances will show a further rise. As it is, such expenditure is over Rs. 8 crores out of approximately Rs. 20 crores. As against this our revenue receipts are less than half a crore. Besides the consolidated fund of Mizoram has been showing a minus balance of the order of Rs. 2 to 3 crores in the last two years mainly on account of short recoveries under State Trading and food-grain and other supplies. These do not constitute a healthy trend for future, and are causing concern to my Government. I am sure, the Hon'ble Members will share this concern and will suggest ways to achieve full recoveries under State Trading and of various loans and also consider ways and means to increase tax-revenues.

21. The Police in this State is still in its infancy and it has a long way to go before it becomes an efficient, well-knit and disciplined force. My Government is determined to achieve this and put a new life in the Mizoram Police, backed by large-scale re-organisation, adequate training and proper motivation. Recently we had the benefit of advice from senior Officials of the Ministry of Home Affairs and other experts in these fields. Necessary schemes are being drawn up for re-vamping and strengthening of the Police Force in all its segments and the Government of India have assured us that no constraints will be tolerated in achieving this prime objective, since an efficient, reliable and trust-worthy Police Force constitutes the very foundation of a democratic Government and any civilized society. Further, in view of the urgency of the task, it is proposed to induct for certain period trained and experienced personnel from all possible sources, and take the help of the Border Roads Organisation for construction of certain buildings.

Similarly, immediate measures have been adopted for commissioning the Jail at Saiha and reducing congestion in Aizawl Jail by transferring certain inmates to a camp jail set up temporarily at Tuirial. It is hoped that the construction of a proper new jail in the Capital will be taken up soon.

22. My predecessor had occasion to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Members in his address last year to the great harm being done to the cause of future development and prosperity of Mizoram by the underground M.N.F. persisting in their cult of violence. He had also appealed to you to condemn such acts and carry this message to the people that they must desist from co-operating with such undesirable elements in their own interest. Events of the past year further underline the importance of such a message educating the people about the futility of continuing with senseless acts of violence and disorder, which only add to their difficulties and that of the Government in ensuring law and order and working for the development of Mizoram. My Government feel that time has come for the people to make their choice known for the peaceful democratic way of life and organised themselves

in support of the agencies for the maintenance of law and order. I have no doubt in my mind that with public co-operation this problem can be tackled speedily and the handful of miscreants brought to book.

In the alternative, as long as people do not pledge their undivided loyalty to the cause of a peaceful democratic social order as enshrined in the Constitution of India, and keep wavering, there will be difficulties for both the Government and the people. The Governments have to deal with a situation like this firmly, and may be forced to adopt harsh measures, which cause unnecessary and avoidable hardship to people. My Government are anxious to avoid taking such measures, and therefore, I renew the appeal to you to act with courage and conviction for this most urgent task of convincing the people about the right path to be taken by them in the interests of Mizoram. Let there be no scope for anyone to imagine that this great nation will be found wanting in safeguarding its integrity and territorial sovereignty. Mizoram is a part of mother - India, and its faith is inevitably linked with that of the country as a whole. Like all other citizens every Mizo must feel Indian first and Mizo next. Ours is the largest functioning democracy and we have demonstrated to the world that people belonging to different race, creed and religion can live together in peace and harmony, and enjoying equal rights, march hand-in-hand towards progress. With us, this is an act of faith, and we shall consider no sacrifice too great for upholding national unity and integrity of our frontiers.

JAI HIND.