

**NINTH MIZORAM LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
(SECOND SESSION CUM BUDGET SESSION)**

LIST OF BUSINESS

FOR TENTH SITTING ON TUESDAY, THE 5th MARCH, 2024
(Time 10:30 A.M to 1:00 P.M. and 2:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.)

QUESTIONS

1. **QUESTIONS** entered in separate list to be asked and oral answers given.

FINANCIAL BUSINESS

2. **GENERAL DISCUSSION** on the Budget for the year 2024-2025 (to be concluded)

VANLALTHANTLINGI
Commissioner & Secretary

SPEAKER : “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you”

-Matthew 6:33

Today, I inform this House that hon. member Pu Lalthansanga cannot attend the sitting due to illness.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

We will take questions and answers and call upon Dr. K. Beichhua to ask *Starred Question No. 141*.

DR. K. BEICHHUA : Pu Speaker, thank you. Will the hon. Minister for School Education be pleased to state –

- a) Whether there is an intention to fill-up vacant post of DIET Lecturer at Siaha?
- b) Whether construction of Siaha DIET Hostel extended till November, 2023, if so, the reason?

SPEAKER : Let us call upon the hon. Minister for School Education Dr. Vanlalhlana.

DR. VANLALHLANA, MINISTER: Pu Speaker, answers to Dr. K. Beichhua’s questions are –

- a) Step was taken to fill-up 32 vacant posts and permission was applied to DP&AR (ARW).
- b) It was extended till November, 2023 and not more.

SPEAKER : *Supplementary* from Dr. K. Beichhua.

DR. K. BEICHHUA : My *supplementary questions* are:

- i) Siaha DIET Lecturer post is 18 and 12 are posted. Out of 12 2 of them are attached to Aizawl. If 32 are going to be recruited can you at least put the attached in Aizawl back?
- ii) Regarding construction of Hostel, only 60% physical achievement was there and the whereabouts of the employees is unknown. Can action be taken immediately? Besides, only 70% of the vertical extension was done.
- iii) The condition of Higher Secondary Lecturer and High School Teacher under Samagra are not good. Their salary is low and are paid in quarterly. No annual increment and no medical re-imbursement. Is there any intention to improve their condition in this new system?
- iv) We have no Science stream in Siaha College till date in spite of being Gazette in 2010. Now that we have a feeder, can you take the initiative in the new system especially in Science, Commerce and Geography stream?

SPEAKER : *Supplementary question* from Pu T. Lalhlimpuia, member from Lunglei West.

PU T. LALHLIMPUA : Pu Speaker, thank you. My *supplementary question* is – Is there an intention to change into common school uniform as it is going to have a great impact?

SPEAKER : *Supplementary question* from Pu Lalrinsanga Ralte, hon. member from Serlui.

PU LALRINSANGA RLATE: Pu Speaker, thank you. My *Supplementary questions* are –

- i) Is there an intention to regularize Samagra teacher under CSS?
- ii) When will several school the previous government put under lump sum, adhoc grant-in-aid and provincialize?

SPEAKER : *Supplementary question* from Lt. Col. Clement Lalhmingthanga, hon. member from Champhai South.

LT. COL. CLEMENT LALHMINGTHANGA: Pu Speaker, my *Supplementary question* – The teacher: student ratio is too inconsistent across the country. How is rationalization implemented to solve all these problems?

PU K. HRAHMO : Pu Speaker, point of clarification. In this House our Starred Question and Supplementary Question are not related so far, it would be hard for the Minister to reply. Used your power to stop the Minister from answering.

SPEAKER : What hon. member from Palak said is valid. In this regard I also made a request yesterday. However, it would be appreciated if we keep in mind what member from Palak said. While all members have the freedom to ask question, let us try to keep it in the same department and subject. Now, let us call upon the hon. School Education Minister Dr. Vanlalhlana to reply.

DR. VANLALHLANA, MINISTER: Pu Speaker, thank you. While DIET teachers are inflexible in some places there are too many and in some there are less. Right now, we are trying to resolve this problem. Seniority List has been prepared and adjustment of Principal was under consideration. After we look into attached and transfer, we will make consideration. Regarding extension of construction of DIET Hostel at Lawngtlai, they apply for extension with a back date, but the department decline their application. At Siaha the construction was unfinished as the tile need to be laid, side-drain, septic tank, railing, underground water tank, all these are not done yet also vertical extension in not yet painted. Men's toilet, its doors and windows were not yet installed. We will

look into this soon. After visiting Lawngtlai I called the Contractor twice and give them pressure. We may need to consult law if necessary.

Regarding Samagra Teacher's salary, we hope to give them as soon as Finance released the fund. We paid them up to December. We do not know how long we can pay them but try to pay them not in quarterly. Right now there is no intention to upgrade their position. However, the new government set up Mizoram Education Reforms Committee, which will consider the matter and make recommendations. If they think it is appropriate and acceptable action will be taken.

To answer Pu T. Lalhlimpuia, as I mentioned Education Reforms Committee and it is in their hand. This issue will be carefully considered as it is the policy of the previous government. School timing will also be left to the Reforms committee.

There is a lot to discuss about upgrading asked by Pu Lalrinsanga Ralte. Pu Speaker, Samagra CSS issue was discussed in the Council of Ministers meeting and it was put for further consideration. The second question regarding upgradation. The notification issued by the Council of Ministers meeting of the previous government has not been cancelled yet. Thus, fund for upgradation was put in the budget. We will see in Education Department's Notification issued on September, 22 before the Council of Ministers meeting that there is a plan for school provincialize, grant-in-aid, lump sum and school building. We want to investigate whether all these are really there. However, as mentioned earlier, we have all the plans for the budget. I hope that it will be passed in a fair and transparent manner. The budget will be considered at the Council of Ministers meeting.

Pu Speaker, notification issued of the lump sum aided school was issued in a mistake. It was all done according to the Higher Secondary School rate. If not amended it cannot be implemented. We still have a little time as 1st April, 2024 is the date of implementation. As mentioned, we have to investigate what kind of schools are they, are they up to standard, can they go according to the rules.

Answer to the fourth question is – Transfer and Posting rules are being revised and we intend to not only have the rules but implement it. The current transfer and posting rules are 'A' for the city. The rationalization is a 'A', 'B', 'C', and 'D' etc., While some schools have 12-13 teachers some have only one. We intend to abolish the single teacher school within our ministry. We consider adding at least one teacher to the 60 schools. There is shortage of teachers in the country and hope we will have time to mention during demand discussion.

SPEAKER : Let us call upon the hon. member Pu H. Ginzalala from Champhai North.

PU H. GINZALALA : Pu Speaker, thank you. Will the hon. Minister for Transport Department be pleased to state –

- Whether vehicle increases due to taking turns to running.
- No. of vehicle increased before and after apply taking turns.
- No. of vehicles stand daily.
- Has there been any study on the adverse/negative impact on the economy due to vehicles taking turns. If, not, does the government think it necessary.

SPEAKER : Let us call upon the hon. Minister Pu Vanlalhlana, i/c Transport Department to reply.

PU VANLALHLANA, MINISTER: Pu Speaker, the answers are –

- No research has been done by the Transport Department.
- Data are given below for this and are available at VAHAN under Transport Department:

<i>Period</i>	<i>No. of Registered Vehicles</i>
2011-2012	9,435
2012-2013	9,952
2013-2014	10,517
2014-2015	9,247
2015-2016	9,445
2016-2017	11,820
Total	60,416

For the period of 6 years 60,415 vehicles was registered and after 6 years i.e., 2017-2023 126,697 was registered.

- Taking turns of vehicles was only used in Aizawl Municipal Corporation Area. As Aizawl is the capital, it is hard to know the no. of vehicles stopped daily.
- Transport Department has not yet conducted any research on this matter and there is no intention right now.

SPEAKER : *Supplementary question* - Pu H. Ginzalala.

PU H. GINZALALA : Pu Speaker, my *Supplementary question* is – Is it worth continuing vehicles taking turns.

SPEAKER : *Supplementary question* – Pu Lalchhuanthanga from Aizawl South III

PU LALCHHUANTHANGA: Pu Speaker, my *Supplementary question* is – How many Transport Bus are there in Mizoram? Which route they run?

SPEAKER : Let us call upon Pu Lalmuanpuia Punte from Hrangturzo constituency.

PU LALMUANPUIA PUNTE: Pu Speaker, my *Supplementary questions* –

- i) Is there an intention to appoint DTO in the new District?
- ii) Is the answer he gave regarding increase of vehicle only in Aizawl or within Mizoram?
- iii) If all the vehicles are allowed to run in a day what will happen?

SPEAKER : *Supplementary question* Pu TBC Lalvenchhunga from Aizawl West I constituency.

PU TBC LALVENCHHUNGA: Pu Speaker, thank you. My *supplementary question* –

- i) Is there a way to exempt Aizawl West I from vehicles taking turns as we are not covered by traffic jam.
- ii) As we are part of a rural area and urban area, is there a way to allow Auto-rickshaw service to the fork of Company' petrol pump.

SPEAKER : Let us call upon hon. Minister for Transport Department Pu Vanlalhlana to reply.

PU VANLALHLANA, MINISTER: Pu Speaker, to answer Pu Ginzalala, Vehicles taking turns to run was not initiated by Transport Department, it is in the hand of the Co-ordination Committee on Traffic Management and it will be their decision.

To answer Pu Chhuana, right now MST Buses operates in 9 routes in Mizoram - Aizawl – Lunglei, Aizawl – Khuangthing, Aizawl – marpara, Aizawl – Mimbung, Aizawl – North Hlimen, Aizawl – Rajiv Nagar, Aizawl – Phuldungsei, Siaha – Chakhei and two services as Lunglei Town Bus.

To answer Pu Lalmuanpuia, hon. member – There is an intention to open three new DTOs offices in three new District such as Saitual, Hnahthial, and Khawzawl and the department officials work hard for this. We already have Finance clearance. After Recruitment Rules for recruitment of MVI and other staff is prepared, we will open the office.

To answer member from Aizawl West I, as mentioned before, it is not in our purview but in the hand of the Co-ordination Committee on Traffic management. However, I thought the operation was right as it will relieve the people. Therefore, I think it is a good thing to do, thank you, Pu Speaker.

SPEAKER : Now, let us call upon hon. member from Tuichang Pu W. Chhuanawma to ask *Starred Question No. 143*.

PU W. CHHUANAWMA : Pu Speaker, thank you. Will the hon. Minister for Excise & narcotics Department be pleased to state –
What efforts does the government take in the fight against drugs?

SPEAKER : Let us call upon the hon. Minister to reply.

PU LALNGHINGLOVA HMAR, MINISTER: Pu Speaker, the answer is as follow – Nodal Department Excise & Narcotics staff are re-encourage and used their equipment and skill more effectively. Narcotics Cell in every district is being upgraded and intends to set up Station in three new District – Saitual, Khawzawl, and Hnahthial. Besides, consultation was held on 13th January with Church Youth and the Chief Minister and Social Welfare Minister were present. Meeting was held with CYMA Executive Committee on 4th January and later with CYMA OBs at the Minister Office chamber. Efforts are being made to recruit more staff and improve equipment. Transfer was done according to transfer rule in order to strengthen fight against frugs, thank you Pu Speaker.

SPEAKER : *Supplementary question* – Pu W. Chhuanawma from Tuichawng constituency.

PU W. CHHUANAWMA : Pu Speaker, thank you.

During the campaign period I stayed in Khawzawl for three months and what I discovered sadden me. There are many widows who are still capable of giving birth suffers because of alcohol and drugs. Pu Speaker, this beautiful city is still worthy of rescue. My supplementary question is – Can a full Excise Department not just a station open? What will be the process of transfer in this department?

SPEAKER : *Supplementary question* for Pi Baryl Vanneihsangi from Aizawl South III.

PI BARYL VANNEIHSANGI: Pu Speaker, thank you. My supplementary question is – Is drugs increased or decreases? Does campaign against drugs by the government and various groups has effect? We deserve to know our true situation.

SPEAKER : *Supplementary question* for Pu Robert Romawia Royte from Hachhek constituency.

PU ROBERT ROMAWIA ROYTE: Pu Speaker, my supplementary question –

- i) Kanhmun which is in Hachhek constituency is a tri-junction for Mizoram, Tripura and Assam border. It is very import for drug checking as it will prevent many drugs smuggling in Mizoram. Is there any plan to strengthen the Excise Force there?
- ii) West Phaileng and Marpara are also bordered by Bangladesh and Tripura. In order to prevent drugs smuggling can plan be made in West Phaileng and its important station?

SPEAKER : Now let us call upon the hon. Minister for Excise & Narcotics Department to reply.

PU LALNGHINGLOVA HMAR, MINISTER: Pu Speaker, there is an intention not only in Khawzawl but also in our new District Hnahtial and Khawzawl to open Excise headquarter. Due to shortage of fund we cannot take step as we desire. However, we are taking step to implement it as much as we can. Regarding transfer, on March 4, 80 Excise Officers were transferred and it was conducted as per Excise Manual. We have to know that when we stay in the same place for too long we get to know each other and is easy to make mistakes.

Regarding Pi Baryl Vanneihsangi's question, it is hard to say. We have a close working relationship with the CYMA and they updated me on the current situation. From their report it appears that right now drugs is hard to find. The price of heroin and codeine is high. When we make big seizure is it effect or not, it is hard to say. There are so many to seize and the staff are working very hard. From the arrest we made during 2024, it appears that there are many at the open.

It is very shameful to know the full report, however the member wanted to know and we have to exposed all that. The arrest percentage is 20.18 per day. While our workers work hard there is still so much to do. Therefore, we invited Churches, NGO and Youth Group to work with us. If we all lend our hand I hope it will become less and less. Right now, our situation is not very favorable

To answer Pu Robert Romawia, the government is aware of the problems faced by Kanhmun, West Phaileng. We will see whether Mamit can take over. The most difficult thing is that we are under-staffed. At the same time, we invite NGOs everywhere to strengthen good governance and join us in the fight against drugs for the country. We hope to make further progress with their help.

Pu Speaker, one thing I would like to point out is that due to Manipur conflict, many drugs that go to Manipur are going through Mizoram. Local movement is not increasing as before in spite of large seizure made. In the case of drugs, it is no secret that they invaded us, we died and many families cried. Therefore, in order to step further we all have to work together.

SPEAKER : Now, let us call upon hon. member from Thorang, Pu R.Rohmingliana to ask *Starred Question No. 144.*

PU R. ROHMINGLIANA: Pu Speaker, will the hon. Minister for Excise & Narcotics Department be pleased to state –

Is there an intention to sell liquor in this government?

PU LALNGHINGLOVA HMAR, MINISTER: Pu Speaker, the answer is –
The government has no intention to sell liquor at present.

SPEAKER : *Supplementary* from Pu R. Rohmingliana.

PU R. ROHMINGLIANA : Pu Speaker, my supplementary question – In the three Autonomous District Council, if there is an intention to sell liquor, is the Excise & Narcotics Department have any authority to take action.

SPEAKER : Let us call upon the hon. Minister Pu Lalngthinglova Hmar.

PU LALNGHINGLOVA HMAR, MINISTER: Pu Speaker, we will reply in writing in order to avoid false answer with your permission.

SPEAKER : Is it alright (The House approves). Now, Let us call upon the hon. member Pu Robert Romawia Royte to ask *Starred Question No. 145.*

PU ROBERT ROMAWIA ROYTE: Pu Speaker, will the hon. Minister for School Education Department be pleased to state –

No. of Govt. Primary School and Govt. Middle School within Aizawl Municipal Area. No. of enrollment and teachers.

SPEAKER : Let us call upon the hon. Minister for School Education Department Dr. Vanlalhlana.

DR. VANLALTHLANA, MINISTER: Pu Speaker, thank you. The answer is – Govt. Primary School – 111, Govt. Middle School – 76. No. of enrollment and teachers are as follows – Govt. Primary School – 7454, teachers – 636; Govt. Middle School – 4011, teachers – 634.

SPEAKER : *Supplementary question* for Pu R.M.Chakma, hon. member from Tuichawng.

PU RASIK MOHAN CHAKMA: Pu Speaker, my supplementary question is – Can we stop fill-in teacher in reality? What is the government plan to run Kamalanagar

HSS where there is no LDC and Peon? Teachers are six fewer than the total no. of created post. Is there a way to post them again?

SPEAKER : *Supplementary question* – Pu Lalramliana Papua from Lunglei South.

PU LALRAMLIANA PAPUIA: Pu Speaker, my *Supplementary question* is – Is there a way to transfer teachers who are politically transferred before this election in the same post with careful study conducted by the Minister.

SPEAKER : *Supplementary question* from Pu H. Lalzirliana, hon. member from Mamit.

PU H. LALZIRLIANA : Pu Speaker, my *Supplementary question* is – Two Economic Lecturers were transferred from Mamit Govt. College with no replacement. Does the Minister know this and how will he take step?

SPEAKER : Now, let us call upon the hon. School Education Minister Dr. Vanlalhlana to reply.

DR. VANLALHLANA, MINISTER: Pu Speaker, first I would like to say that what the hon. member Pu H. Lalzirliana asked was in the purview of the Higher & Technical Education Department and the department officials will take note.

SPEAKER : Please, question hour is over, will we let him finish answering. (The House agreed) I want him to keep in mind that Dr. K. Beichhua's question also concerns College.

DR. VANLALHLANA, MINISTER: Pu Speaker, to answer hon. member Pu RM Chakma, we are trying our best to stop it. The KAI application mentioned by the Chief Minister is also being processed by the ICT Department for use by the School Education Department. This will tell us whether the teachers attend or not by using their registered phone number and that is how we pursue. The official no. of fill-in teachers is 532 some of them returned to their post. We will continue to follow the issue. This issue was submitted to DP&AR and will take action as they see fit.

Regarding Kamalanagar Higher Secondary School, teacher recruited under SEDP will not be able to work till March and we make other arrangement. In the minimum requirement of teacher there are at least 1414. We will checked this and apply to Finance Department. If the Finance Department approves, we will inform and give you priority. Besides, teachers, LDC and Peon, we will keep that in mind. However, we have to give important to Exam Centre as their work load is heavy. We cannot place Peon and LDC in every school but will prioritize Exam Centre.

To answer Pu Lalramliana, we received many letters. We are currently giving thoughts and exercising it and known political transfers will be given priority, thank you.

FINANCIAL BUSINESS

SPEAKER : Now, Question and Answer hour is over and we will go to Financial Business and resume our discussion. Do we agree 10 minutes as yesterday for one member? (The House agreed). Now, let us call upon Pu K. Hrahmo.

PU K. HRAHMO : Pu Speaker, thank you. When I studied our budget as much as I can, I saw that we are very poor. We depended on the Central Government for a long time without any production. If our economy is good the current government will not need to announce this year the 'Year of Consolidation'. It means we have to reduce our intake in our everyday live. What I fear most is that we may need to repeat this for the years to come. Our situation is that we may have use these 5 years as a 'Year of Consideration'.

Pu Speaker, I study the Finance Minister's speech as much as I could. On S. No. 41 – we see clearly 'Devolution of Central Taxes and Duties', clearly shows that 41% of taxes collected in India is distributed to each State. From here we received 0.5%. It means that 40% of taxes collected were in the hand of the BJP. Besides the budget received every State try to extract fund from the BJP purse. It will be very hard for us. The previous ministry fails in this regard and is not good for our country. We have high hope in this new government and I want them to know it.

God loves this country and if He is going to bless us, He will use this government as a tool. While Mizoram is a Christian country we are afraid of so many things. I will conclude my discussion and will give my support to pass.

SPEAKER : Now, let call upon the hon. member from Tuipui East Pu Ramthanmawia.

PU RAMTHANMAWIA : Pu Speaker, thank you. Our CM and House Leader wait for a long time to present this budget and we are happy for him.

In this year budget there are things we have never seen before like 5 crore fund set aside for morgue van to be used by the members when there is a need. This will alleviate as so much especially those whose constituencies are in the rural areas. Besides this, there is one thing that needs our attention and that is patient whose illness is so severe those doctors advise them to go home. They need oxygen, nurses and Ambulance for this as they want their loved one to reach their home before death.

Pu Speaker, it is very thankful that four selected crops such as, ginger, pepper; broom and turmeric are included in the budget to buy at minimum support price and I want the

government to really take a step in this. As mentioned, the government is going to buy from the farmer and because of that they prepared themselves happily. As we are going Research base we need to be careful in the selection of the agent.

It is also thankful that among the 6 basic needs that the House Leader give important 20.13 crore was allocated in the budget for the distribution of power generation. Our power supply tools are all in a bad condition, it one of our main problems in our constituency. Khawbung to Samthang power supply line was always destroyed whenever there is a heavy rain and wind. With this allocation in the budget we hope that our problem will be solved.

Pu Speaker, it is also thankful that 100 crore was allocated in the budget for roads and bridges under PWD. The system we cannot abandon for a long time in repairing of road is that we waited too long to repair it. We only do repairing after it is too damage. This causes a lot of hardship for the people. Let us follow a new system in this new government.

Pu Speaker, it is going to be true what the House Leader said about not to do development work for a year. It appears that we are going to increase taxes and bills from the people. It appears that Vehicle tax is going to increase, we already increase stamp duty from 1% to 3%, and what others will they increase? The increase of motor transport vehicle tax will affect the people. It would be good if we can increase it not to burden the people too much.

We know that we make good use of CSS funds in various departments. We are putting less in this budget, Is it because we hope to receive 100% funding. It would be interesting to know. Are we not going to raise funds from NLCPR, NESIDS and NEC? No fund was allocated for SMS in this budget. Pu Speaker, it is thankful that for the government policy 'hand-holding policy' 200 crore was allocated. I hope that the youths will use this carefully for their development and there will be no discrimination in its selection.

I will go to healthcare, the government used to give important in this matter. While it is thankful that 20 crore was allocated, is it too little. Besides, what the Health Minister mentioned about Universal Health Coverage System, cashless system for every household up to 5 lakh was not included in this budget.

I am thankful that for the first time in our budget under Home, School Education and Social Welfare we included gender budget. We have three respected women MLAs for whom a separate Recess Room should be provided. It cannot be said that more women will sit in the House in the future and will be good to think about it now.

I want to convey my congratulation to old age people for their pension contribution is increase from 100 to 1000. We also hope that Mizoram State Project Monitoring

Committee will monitor the work done under the Mizoram Government as they promised to the people.

Last, while a good budget is a source for success and development, its execution is important. Let us present a budget that is good for all of us. If not executed properly large amount of budget is nothing. Whether the budget is large or small if executed properly it becomes useful and last long. I convey my blessing to this new government to use this Budget Estimate of 2024-2025 amounting to 14412.12 crore. Pu Speaker, thank you.

SPEAKER : Now, let us call upon the hon. member Pu Lalramliana Papuaia from Lunglei South.

PU LALRAMLIANA PAPUIA: Pu Speaker, thank you. The budget has been present by those who never present it before. However, when I hear praises coming from those who presented budget before makes me happy and heartwarming.

When I looked at the budget I am happy to notice that it was free from fund that are given freely and received freely in the past. The people of Mizoram need to know that now they are going to receive hand-holding policy. I am pleased that this budget is a working, realistic and capable budget that will be used for development without any preference.

The budget expenditure percentage for development works is lower than the previous budget. However, a closer look shows that it will bring more development. As mentioned by the hon. CM, the year of consolidation will be implemented. As such, no big project will be implemented this year. Also, Capital Expenditure, State borrowing scheme have been reduced by 697.69 crore. Therefore, in this budget we are not trying to increase debt instead reduces debt. While Capital Expenditure may look low, if used correctly and firmly, it can be used for more development works than ever before. If we look into Revenue Expenditure, it is higher than last year's revenue expenditure. The reason is that salary of the government servant and demand are allocated as it should be. The Revenue Expenditure reflects the true situation of the country.

I would like to mention about one thing that I personally care about. In this budget we see 'Old Age Pension' under NSAP. It is going to increase from 100 to 1000 and I am happy for the elderly. We need to pay attention to the elderly. It is because of them that we reach where we are.

We have seen in this budget the much-needed plan. As I see it if we do not give priority to rural economy development and youth needs, we will never have full development in our country. I am happy to see that under hand-holding policy and Agriculture Market Assurance Fund allocation was made for the farmers. If we do not develop 800 rural villages in rural areas there will never be a full-fledged development in Mizoram. I want to say about the Governor advice mentioned in Governor Address about to be brave

when making difficult decision. I am thankful that in order to have more revenue stamp duty and registration bills were passed

Therefore, the budget is allocated only for the purpose for which it is intended. It is not a budget to fulfill our desire, but for the development works. Officials should know that there will be no extra to pocket. In conclusion, Pu Speaker, this budget includes measures that we should not ignore in our current situation, corruption and free spending, and paves a way for the need of the youth, and gives attention to rural farmers. This budget made comprehensive provisions for the weaker section and the elderly. I look forward to it, thank you.

SPEAKER : Let us call upon hon. member from Aizawl South-III
Pi Baryl Vanneihsangi.

PI BARYL VANNIHSANGI: Pu Speaker, thank you. We are discussing about the right of the people and the country from various perspectives. I wanted to invite member to rule with love for the people we serve with no boundaries.

I would like to make a comment on two points in the first paragraph. First, it is about 'inclusive development'. The 11th Five Year Plan during 2007 to 2012 used 'inclusive development' as the theme. Meanwhile, this year budget is the first time that inclusive development has been taken seriously as we see 'gender budget' for the first time.

Second, I want to discuss about 'realistic', 'transparency', 'financial management' and 'accountability'. Budget has been passed many times in our country. However, fiscal targets are not achieved regularly resulting to revision of budget estimate in the next year. Therefore, this year Supplementary Demand for Grant 3294.16 crore is presented. Is the reason that there is no 'realistic thinking' enough? I think a more accurate, transparent estimate presented today is welcoming.

Pu Speaker, I would like to discuss the debt issue briefly. The excess of outstanding liabilities on debt is an embarrassment for the government and failure in financial management. While debt less is impossible, it is the government responsibility to reduce the debt in terms of our GSDP. The Fiscal Responsibility & Budget Management Act, 2006 amendment 2020 set out the road map for the amount of debt. In the previous ministry our debt ratio is 37.84%. The road map was never implemented in the previous governments. However, in this budget as we have seen in point 6 of the budget speech, it was lower than the target made by the FRBM as 29.22% was expected to be achieved.

We must reduce our burdens and aim for reality. Pu Speaker, a good government must spend wisely without adding burdens to the people. As seen in our budget speech, if our total output increases by 29.22%, it will be ₹2434.81 crores or 19.66% of our total revenue receipts. In point-4, we see that steps towards increasing tax revenue are

mentioned. It will pave the way towards development. Point-5 also mentions that there is an expectation of ₹564.95 crores as revenue surplus.

Regarding point-34, we all must contribute towards the improvement of education. The allocated budget in the education sector is increased by 26% and 32.03% for Higher & Technical. Since education is the backbone of our economy, I support this move.

In the Health sector, there was an initiative taken by our Health Minister on 8th February. A free medical camp was organized in which out of 300 candidates, 100 people were elected for heart surgery and I am glad to witness that people in need get to enjoy these benefits from the government.

We must be ready to tackle hard decisions and remember that, “where there is a will, there is a way”. I wish and pray that we make the best use of our budget and I show my support. Pu Speaker, thank you.

SPEAKER : Pu V. Malsawmtluanga, Lunglei North constituency.

PU V. MALSAWMTLUANGA: Pu Speaker, thank you. First of all, I thank God and the people of Lunglei North for giving me this opportunity to sit here and talk about the 9th Mizoram Legislative Assembly Budget 2024-2025.

I also congratulate our Chief Minister for introducing the budget. As we look at it, it is clear that it came out all from himself and without the influence of any experts.

I would like to add some points as an introduction. In my alma mater, Baptist Higher Secondary School, Serkawn, we used to give names for our annual magazine. Similarly, if I were to name this budget, I would call it the ‘*Sekibuhchhuak budget*’.

As our hon. member, Pu Lalramliana Papua mentioned, that there is no ‘policy on distribution’ this time which makes it unique. In the previous governments, we have seen how the governments tried to please people; but that practice has come to an end. We also see that more than ₹200 crores have been allocated for hand-holding policy. Besides, there will be cooperation with the state and the Central scheme.

Besides that, ₹100 crores have been kept for the agriculture market assurance fund that will encourage the farmers. Our Agriculture and Cooperative Minister also has plans to go forward with the Multipurpose Cooperative Society. PACS (Primary Agriculture Credit Society) will also benefit the people, especially in places where Banks are not easily accessible to the village people.

Regarding Sports, the previous Sports Minister played his part well and during 2021-2022, under the PMJVKY, ₹12,287.86 lakhs for sports facilities were received. But it

still seems that those funds were not utilized properly seeing the quality of the constructions and developments. Today, we have an active Sports Minister who cares about the development. There were times when he attended the session skipping breakfast because he drove out early in the morning to inspect places and facilities. It is also great that a table tennis coaching centre will be established through the Khelo India movement.

The 'gender budget' is also noticeable. For the School Education Department and the Social Welfare Department, about ₹74.27 crores are also allocated to fulfil the gender budgeting.

Since our campaign days, we have talked about the stagnant healthcare bills, but now ₹40 crores have been kept for this sector which is great progress. Besides that, more than ₹5 crores have been allocated for the transportation of the deceased bodies. I thank the Ministers for their initiatives.

Additionally, electric bills will not be increased and solar plates will be popularized. If I'm not mistaken, there are plans to set up a solar park in Lunglei. We used to hear that the ZPM government does not put their focus on the southern side of Mizoram, but it is clear from the budget that attention has been given. The HPC funds will increase by ₹2 crores, ₹602.97 crores will be allocated for LMC as well. The moment we formed a government, the water scarcity problem in Lunglei was taken care of. Among those is the upgradation of the Greater Lunglei supply scheme for ₹55.94 crores; the fund is expected from NESID.

Our PWD Minister also went to visit the site. Our Higher & Technical Minister also visited the Engineering College building. I believe that this budget was planned by God for the Lunglei district.

In the previous year, ₹1696.68 crores were allocated for BE and it was increased by ₹1953.75 crores which is 15.1%. The constituencies dominated by the opposition parties will also be equally included according to the budget which is a great move taken by the government. MLA funds are increased from ₹60 to ₹80 crores as well. It is the best budget.

I also support the general consent given to the CBI to fight against corruption. The setting up of the Mizoram State Project Monitoring Committee is also appreciated. ₹50 crores were allocated in the budget to fight against drugs and narcotic substances. To show his dedication, our CM visited the *Tawngtai Bethel Camping Centre* as well. I also support the increase of old age pension from ₹100/- to ₹1000/-.

I request the House members to support our budget. Pu Speaker, thank you.

SPEAKER : Pu Rasik Mohan Chakma, Tuichawng constituency.

PU RASIK MOHAN CHAKMA: Pu Speaker, thank you. As this time is about the general discussion of the budget, I adore the Indian Parliamentary System since we have the chance to generally discuss certain matters.

Pu Speaker, three new things appear in the budget this time. For the first time, the 'Gender budget' appeared and most of it are centrally sponsored scheme I believe; although it is not a very new concept. If we are going to apply this, the target group such as women and children must be made aware and that they are educated. It would reach wide if this awareness were made available in Chakma and Mara languages as well. Along with this, I'd like to see 'Performance Budget' as well. Let's expect this from next year onwards and let that be my suggestion.

While we were expected from the Central government, why can't we have a District Planning Development Board? Duplicity can arise if this Board do not exist. In the past years, we constructed a primary school at Parva-3 using district council funds but later we realized that there were funds from DC's backward block grounds. Since those funds came from the NEC, they can't be diverted. So, it means we constructed two primary schools in one village.

One more incident was when the Health Sub-center was in the process of construction, I received a call from the YMA accusing the contractor of not doing a decent job. Our CMO assured us that they were not aware of them constructing a Health Sub-centre. Had there been a District Planning Development Board, these miscommunications would not have happened. Some officers will be needed and I don't think the extra staff needs to be employed. This is my proposal towards the new government that wants to implement new things.

The Central government is also disturbed by the wide development gap and treats Mizoram as a special category state. For example, when the government pays attention to the RSBY, the BRGF, the Backward Region Grant, Minority MSGP, the PMJVK and the Aspirational Districts that we know today, there must also be a way to bridge the development gap based on a specific approach. Even a small state like Mizoram also faces a development gap.

These days, not only India but also Mizoram experiences a lot of migration from rural to urban/ city areas. Amenities and facilities that reach all the villages need to be provided so that the main cities won't be so congested. Around the year 2004-2005, there used to be a scheme named "Providing of Urban Amenities in Rural Areas". If we could adopt some schemes similar to that one, it would be of great use.

Pu Speaker, we all are concerned about road maintenance. There must be a way to utilize the NREGS funds, especially in villages that rely on *the Annual jungle Clearance* on the PWD-constructed roads. Bot the departments may reach a consensus since it is not

something technical. Also, road maintenance is not an easy job and can we include private suggestions on this? These are my suggestions.

Another point is that the minorities in Mizoram wish to protect, preserve and promote our traditions and culture. The central government also give importance to this and there are also schemes under the Cultural Ministry and the Tribal Affairs. We expect the state government to support us when we put up proposals based on this as well. Biju, a festival of the Chakmas used to be celebrated annually in Tripura and we wish for the same in Mizoram. Also, when it comes to languages, in the 2011 census, the Chakma population was 96,000+ but the Chakma language is not yet recognized by the state. It is ridiculous that in the Linguistic Minority Commission Report, we are still categorized as 'Bengali speakers'.

Let me also talk about broomsticks, which are the burning issue these days. The farmers are unable to sell their produce. (**Speaker:** Could you conclude since you have exceeded by three minutes?) If I'm not mistaken, the Nagaland government set the rate for broomsticks, ₹100/kg. If the farmers cannot sell, the government buys it from them and then auctions those broomsticks. Even if other states want to buy it at the cheapest rate, if our state government adopts what Nagaland does, there might be a way to help our farmers.

Regarding the three District Councils, let me also mention that despite the similarities in administrative structures, there is a huge disparity in the way funds were allotted so please take note of this.

Overall, the budget is fine and we will be constructive with clean hearts. I also request that unfavourable attitudes or speaking intentionally in a way that hurts other people's sentiments must be avoided. Thank you.

SPEAKER : Pu C. Ngunlianchunga, Lawngtlai West Constituency.

PU C. NGUNLIANCHUNGA: Pu Speaker, thank you. As I have a mild cold, please excuse that part.

I am grateful that we are here today to discuss the first budget session witnessed by the new government. Since the previous terms, I used to talk about the unrealistic Revenue Expenditure and the Capital Expenditure which often needs to be corrected at the end of the year in the form of Supplementary Demands. I believe it will go right this time when I see 82.97% for Revenue Expenditure and 17.03% for Capital Expenditure. As we look into last year's *Supplementary Demand for Grant*, almost every page contained supplementary grants for salaries. The main point I used to tell them is that they reduced Revenue Expenditures to despise people and add them as Capital Expenditures. Later,

those were added among Supplementary Demands again. It may not be perfect but I am glad to see a challenging point here.

Nevertheless, I doubt if we can fulfil all these points mentioned in our budget. Point-7 of our Finance Minister's speech – The Consolidated Sinking Fund (CSF) and the Guarantee Redemption Fund (GRF) are reserve funds that some state governments maintain with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). My doubt is, that the interests that came from fund investments should be used for clearing the state government's contingencies liability. Our investment for CSF between 2023 and 2024 is ₹19.44 crores and ₹12.96 crores are expected to be invested more. That means, in total ₹32.40 crores will be invested. It mentions that till February 2024, the amount in this fund was ₹374.66 crores but our investment was ₹32.40 crores. Is that an interest? I didn't understand that part. Secondly, GRF is for giving loan guarantees for institutions under the government and to act as a helping hand for those in dire need. Till February 2024, the principal investment under GRF is ₹64 crores. Within this financial year, ₹24.62 crores have been withdrawn from this fund and ₹2.70 crores have been invested this year. ₹10.80 crores are expected to be invested more, and by the end of 2023-2024, our balance is expected to be ₹45 crores, how is that calculated? As per my calculations, it will be 52.88 crores and I would like to listen to an explanation on how it could be ₹45 crores only.

In Serial no. 12- SASCI, ₹694 crores were given to the previous government and ₹463 crores were released, from that ₹200 crores were given to the implementing agencies. That means, ₹263 crores remained and what are we going to do with that amount?

In point no-13. We also see that the pension benefit of ₹283. 13 crores remain in the Treasury, is there a way to release these?

Point no-14 is about the new government with 'new ways; the people's government'. I admire the new administration's efforts to combat corruption, the eternal enemy. Corruption has been rampant and this hampers our development. As a whole, I will keep supporting this kind of ambition.

Point no-19 mentions the 'Resource Mobilization Committee' and how they will go about it. They shall work on collecting malfunctioned machinery and selling them off, and studying the condition of the workers. It is important to conduct this since the Secretariat at MINECO looks after only one department. Their salary is a huge amount so they can for sure take care of three departments at least. Also, if a small amount of money comes from auctioning old machines, that would still help; just as the saying, "...little drops of water make a mighty ocean". It would be beneficial for the buyers as well.

Regarding point-20, I also support calling in the CBI. At the same time, we have the Lok Ayukta that can penalize even the Chief Minister. {**Speaker:** Shall we give some time to finish his speech? (The House agrees)}. So, I request strengthening the Lok

Ayukta. Even though I support calling in the CBI from the Central government, we can sort out many things without their help. They are supposed to take care of non-development expenditures (b) which first include the Lok Ayukta. However, we do not see much about the effectiveness of the Lok Ayukta till today.

About point no-27, Social Welfare, as an MLA of a village area, we often face problems when someone dies. Sometimes, when one deceased body is dropped off at their villages, another one dies before the morgue van comes back. There were times when we had to use our official cars, and refilling the oil was often required. So, I am glad that our concern will be solved.

I also recognise how the old age pension is increased to ₹1000/-; it shows the care and respect shown towards the senior citizens. There are different kinds in old age pensions, so, let that be enquired properly.

The previous government allocated ₹50 crores for healthcare and ₹10 crores from revenues. Meanwhile, this speech mentions there are only ₹35 crores. Why don't we release the ₹25 crores left for people in need? Our House Leader might not be able to give answers since that was from the previous administration. It is problematic to be in this kind of situation.

This government also plans to have a better healthcare system and puts in ₹20 crores. We also heard that ₹40 crores are remaining from the SEDP and ₹25 crores are left from last year as well. Since we have to pay our debts, we have to work on repayment first so we will not be able to provide the best.

Lastly, it is a must to give thanks. There was much less time when the ADC was spoken about. We have to understand how the ADC works and how we were born out of the 6th schedule. It is written, "...Grant in aid will be given as general". In the past, grant-in-aid and non-salary used to be differentiated and we have seen how the increments gradually increased. ₹1360 lakhs used to be given as non-salary in which office maintenance, vehicle, OE, etc are spent. It might not be the best decision to provide grant-in-aid in general under the same head. How will they sort out the funds that we gift them? In another case, there could be an instance where some heads of the District Council transfer everything to the salary, not the non-salary. This could be against the normal practice. Meanwhile, I respect and appreciate our House Leader who wants to recommend the funds for the district council even if it's through direct finance. I would like to add that it is the sole responsibility of the district councils to show their transparency towards their incomes and expenditures.

It is the first time for our Finance Minister to present a budget and it might not be the best, but it is not the worst. We have seen something new and that is much appreciated. Pu Speaker, thank you.

SPEAKER : We shall come back at 2:00 P.M. after recess.
(Recess)

2:00 P.M.

SPEAKER : Pu K. Laldawngliana, Tuirial Constituency.

PU K. LALDAWNGLIANA: Pu Speaker, thank you. The new administration under the Finance Minister, Pu Lalduhoma has presented the budget 2024-2025. With such a limited time, it is not easy as it carries a lot of policies and principles. It is great to witness this.

Pu Speaker, we, the MNF party won't simply criticise the ruling party. Instead, we shall act as a driving force and give constructive criticisms when needed. It is great to note that the government's debt projection has decreased when compared to using the GDSP. Pu Speaker, with your permission, as we look at the Annual Financial Statement, 2023-2024 RE debt compared using GDSP was decreased to 32.29%. It also shows that the debt for the coming year will decrease to 29.22% of GDP, which is great. Let me highlight some benefits that people will get to enjoy- under the Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme, the state contribution per head will increase from ₹100/- to ₹1000/-; ₹20 crores to ease the shortage of Health care funds; ₹5 crores for transportation of deceased with morgue vans for people in need; ₹20.13 crores for power generation and supply; ₹100 crores for construction of connectivity roads; ₹40 crores for Road Fund Board, ₹200 crores for Hand-holding Policy; ₹50 lakhs for juveniles, rehabilitation of alcohol and drug abusers and to fight against drugs and other substances etc. Let there be an initiative from the CBI as they have been permitted to do their work in the state.

I also acknowledge the introduction of the Gender Budget as required by the Central Govt., the establishment of the Agriculture Marketing Assurance Fund Management Board and the Mizoram State Project Monitoring Board.

Pu Speaker, as we study the Budget, the source of revenue is very low, all our expenditures need to be used judiciously. At the same time, it is very brave of the government to increase the stamp duty from 1% to 3%. I believe we have to take a look at the other fields in this regard as well.

We become timid when there is no development. Borrowing is fine if it's for a good cause. As we often talk about reducing our debts. The reason is that since we have a lot of public debt, the central government has given us a good opportunity which is SASCI in which we can lend money without interest for 50 years. I would like to inform you all that this can be transferred to the public debt.

I would like to know if the ₹110 crores could be utilised for the hardworking people, or can it be used for purchasing broomsticks. During the previous administration, the Mizoram government having the highest debt in terms of GDSP was very popular. But debts and different budget figures are all projections. So, the GDSP projections are always different in reality.

Gross Fiscal Deficit between 2023-2024 was 3.47% of the actual GDSP, it tells that we are not under a high deficit. The RBI study of the Budget published in December 2023 mentioned, “The debts of Mizoram government till the end of March 2024 is predicted to be 36.2% of GDSP and based on this, the state stands at the 18th rank”. So, it is wrong to declare that our state has the highest debt.

What I’m trying to point out is that even though it is a statement given by the RBI, our figures are not always right. Taking the percentage will not always be right since the GDSP figures can be wrong at times. Any government must not be humiliated this way. We, the legislators must not be too mindful of the numbers rather, we should think about how to utilise our budget in the best way.

So, we shall continue to seek if people get the advantages. Our former Chief Minister, Pu Zoramthanga used to try his best such that he used to get trolled on social media.

Nevertheless, it is great that the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways sanctions ₹1313.28 crores for the drilling of the Aizawl by-pass road. I appreciate the efforts given by the previous government and all those who were behind it. It is not right to falsely accuse the government of not doing anything and I hope the new government will also put their best foot forward.

Lastly, the budget should be used in the interest of the public. It might not reach our expectations since the production part is not enough and also a large part of it relies on the Central government. I give my best regards for the utilisation. Pu Speaker, thank you.

SPEAKER : Pu W. Chhuanawma, Tuichang constituency.

PU W. CHHUANAWMA : Pu Speaker, thank you. I think that compared to the previous years, people are eager to hear our Chief Minister, who is also our Finance Minister presenting the budget speech. Our topmost priority while preparing this budget was to provide a stable income and economy for the people of Mizoram.

Out of the ₹14412.12 crores budget for the year 2024-2025, ₹12386.49 crores (around 85%) is expected from the Central government which shows our inefficiency and that is a shame. Let’s all accept it as a big challenge and believe that we shall see progress under the guidance of our Chief Minister.

Since this year is announced as the 'Year of Consolidation', the main objective would be a reduction of the deficit and the high number of debts. For 2024-2025, our public debts are expected to be reduced by ₹697.69 crores. Just like our Home Minister used to say, reducing our expenses will be equivalent to saving around crores within 20 seconds.

Now that the Resource Mobilization Committee as well as the anti-corruption measures taken up under the leadership of our CM, we hope we can get rid of the injustice and the falsifications. Reducing expenditures and collecting revenues from auctions will be taken care of by these committees which will save us a good amount of money. For this, I request everyone including the government employees to work with the government. Under the leadership of our Chief Minister, we have also set up the Mizoram State Project Monitoring Committee (MSPMC). It is a brave decision to call in the CBI; not that the ACB were inefficient, but these kinds of decisions are only for those who promised themselves not to indulge in any kind of corruption.

Regarding the hand-holding policy, the government will assist the departments based on their schemes and proposals. It is great that despite the announcement of consolidation, ₹200 crores were kept aside for this policy. Besides, ₹110 crores have been set aside for agriculture market assurance fund as well. I also strongly support the presence of the MSPMC.

I am glad that ₹5 crores were kept for the transportation of deceased bodies to their hometowns. It will be useful since my constituency alone unfortunately sent out 14 deceased bodies to their villages. At the same time, people need to understand that these facilities must be used only for those in dire need, not those who can afford necessities. It is also great to know that ₹20 crores were allocated to the health sector. Not only that, to pay the debts, ₹40 crores were kept in the Revised Estimate between 2023 to 2024. I also appreciate the increase in old age care from ₹100/- to ₹1000/-. Pu Speaker, I support the budget. Thank you.

SPEAKER : Pu Lalmuanpuia Punte, Hrangturzo constituency.

PU LALMUANPUIA PUNTE: Pu Speaker, thank you. I feel that we all agree on the budget. For years, our Leader used to speak about how we can include funds to purchase vegetables and new produce. He used to be opposed but today, as soon as we formed the government, he made it known that we can take steps. Accordingly, 'the 100 days programme' was started along with the 'year of consolidation'.

The Minimum Support Price (MSP) is exclusively for four items. Since the budget has not yet passed, the new ones cannot be used to its full potential. Our CM wanted to purchase them from the old budget and kept the money. But, the firm from outside the state was not sure about their dealings and things got stagnant.

Pu Speaker, I believe the ones to your left also regret their decisions and maybe in the next elections of 2028, they may change their campaign slogans. We still have the whole year to prepare ourselves and let's hope we can purchase the items next year.

The setting up of the Resource Mobilization Committee touches upon the anti-corruption measures and the Project Monitoring Committee that will ensure the contractors do their work as planned is a great development. Regarding the CBI, it's not that the ACBs are not doing their job, but like our former CM, Pu Lal Thanhawla used to say, "Mizos tend to speak for each other"; some people could be our close relatives or with whom we share mutual friends. In this case, CBI will be effective. The introduction of biometric attendance will also prevent substitutes, especially in the Health Department and Education Department as these are important departments.

In the previous administration, the Boundary Committee were often quiet and remained chaotic when the situation arose; I was included as a representative of our party. But the BC under this new administration is already formed and we had a formal sitting once.

The fight against drugs and other substances is taking giant steps. With the uprising conflict in the neighbouring states and country, the routes for smuggling have changed like never before. However, it is good that we are trying our best to control the entry of all these activities in our state.

The hand-holding policy will also be a great help for those who want to start a business but with limited financial resources. I am also pleased to hear that a budget was allocated for the transportation of deceased bodies. But let us keep in mind that only those who really need them should utilise these facilities and not people who can afford to pay the expenses. I myself experienced the same situation when my mother passed away in a hospital in 2005. I chose not to ask for a morgue van since we were able to do it by ourselves. Similarly, the people of Hrangturzo are polite when it comes to sending and delivering messages about unfortunate events since MLAs or candidates cannot always be expected to get involved in all these things. I believe Hrangturzo still maintains their Mizo identity very well and we have to learn from them.

Other than that, we also have to understand the electricity bills; the bills will increase if they are used regularly but it is about the rate. I like our stance towards not increasing the tariff rates. It is unfair to increase the tariffs annually. In the meantime, the bills that we paid might not be able to cover up the debts that we have. Let's hope the same thing does not exist anymore from now onwards.

Pu Speaker, it is also a great improvement that we are planning to increase the old age pension. We have to show our care and support towards the senior citizens.

Also, looking at the budget for the three ADCs (₹607.09 crores), shows that we do not neglect the southern region. In the previous administration, there was a conflict in the contract for the Mara Students' Hostel in Delhi. As soon as we took over the administration, our Chief Minister was wise enough to hand it over to the MADC. It shows that this is a government for the people and let us all agree to pass this budget. Pu Speaker, thank you.

SPEAKER : Dr. K. Beichhua, Siaha constituency.

DR. K. BEICHHUA : Pu Speaker, thank you. As we currently are having a general discussion of the budget, I believe the Budget Estimate for 2024-2025 is so far so good. We see that under the NSAP, the old age pension has increased to ₹100/-; it is called the 'Indira Gandhi Old-Age Pension Scheme'. If we care for 'widows' under the stamp duty, then why don't we increase the Indira Gandhi Widow Pension? Let this be my first question.

Secondly, why don't we also increase the pension for disabled persons? I would like to hear an explanation from the hon. Minister. At the same time, we also have the Gender budget which is mostly Central schemes, it has been there no matter if we include newly hre or not, the scheme will keep going as before. Since this is a new government, we keep seeing new things.

The overall voted budget for 2024-2025 is ₹13,176.85 crores, with the charge it is ₹1235.27 crores. So, the total BE for this year is ₹14,412.12 crores, this is higher by 0.49% compared to 2023-2024; there is not much difference. Depending on the situation, a revised estimate shall be published later and we might see something new in the supplementary demand of 2025-2026. State own tax is expected to be ₹1312.42 crores during 2024-2025. Compared to last year (₹1084.30 crores), it is expected to increase by 25%, which is great news. Devolution of Central Taxes and Duties is also expected to increase by 10.44% which is another good point.

When we look at the grants under the Finance Commission, it seems like the Post-Devolution Revenue Deficit that will be received will decrease; that is, only 586.00 crores will be received. Meanwhile, the local body grants are expected to increase by 5.56% which is normal. We have also increased a bit for the State Disaster Risk Management fund of ₹1910 crores. The CSS is less than 4.15% this year which raises a question. The Externally Aided Project (EAP) that we have received this year is ₹49.17 lakhs; for 2024-2025, it is ₹90 lakhs.

Pu Speaker, I would like an explanation from the Finance Minister regarding Sl. No 51 in which he states that the estimated RE for 2024-2025 is ₹11,957.04 crores. But the Statement under the Mizoram Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act, 2006 states the total revenue expenditure 2024-2025 BE is ₹11821.54 crores which is

contrary to the first one. Then, when we look at the Explanatory Memorandum on Budget 2024-2025, it mentions ₹1,19,514.01 crores which is different again. Pu Speaker, I would like to hear an explanation of these things.

The Budget Speech, pages 15-18 mentions that the Capital Expenditure is ₹2455.08 crores and the allocated amount is ₹3141.19 crores. Under the Explanatory memorandum, that is mentioned as ₹2,23,187.53 crores on page 17 and ₹22,320.59 crores on page 19. Please clarify these.

Regarding taxes, under the State Own Tax Revenue, vehicle tax of 2023-2024, there is an increase from ₹4255.53 to ₹5000. How is this managed? Is it based on the projections about the increasing number of vehicles or is there an attempt to increase taxes? May I get a clarification on this as well?

The grant-in-aid contribution under the revenue account, there is a section on Grants for centrally aided schemes but nothing has been put for the re-election reimbursement. Under the transfer/grant to states, there is a part called, 'election reimbursement', it is expected to receive ₹102.21 lakhs here. Is there a possibility that there is a double entry here is my question?

Page no.5 of the Annual Financial Report/Annual Financial Statement, it can be seen that the grant-in-aid that we are supposed to receive from the CSS is reduced what could be the reason for this? One reason may be the reduction in the Post Devolution Revenue Deficit Grant. Other than that, while it is ₹5,15,849.21 this year, it will be ₹3,85,275.10 in 2024-2025. This makes me wonder why the CSS that we are about to receive is less than expected. Are we hesitant towards the Central? Let's not be.

Pu Speaker, it has been two months since the new government was formed and the budget that was introduced today is quite good. We, the BJP Legislature will extend our full support if it is for the good of the people but will strongly oppose if it will not benefit the general public. I wish the best for everyone. Thank you.

SPEAKER : Prof. Lalnilawma, Tawi constituency.

PROF. LALNILAWMA, MINISTER: Pu Speaker, I enjoy this time but I will not take much time. Let me first state that there are high expectations from the people of our constituency.

Starting with the increase in the budget, there is a 1.42% increase which is ₹202.18 crores. Some might say that the rise in rate is very low when variables such as inflation rate are included, but it shows how realistic it is. We shall go step-by-step under this administration. Pu Speaker, with your permission, let me quote this line, "In consonance with our commitment, public debt for 2024-2025 is estimated to be ₹4,697.69 crores".

It means that with our announcement of the 'Year of Consolidation', we would be able to save ₹697.69 crores which is a positive projection. Our Finance Minister is brave enough to reject some projects to save some expenditures.

We also have the Resource Mobilization Committee, then there is 'Generation of Revenue' under that. The Stamp Bill was also passed last week and we shall keep aiming for the best. In terms of receiving GST, Mizoram ranks the lowest among the northeastern states. Nagaland sees reduction of 5%, Manipur by 13% and Mizoram by 14%. Manipur is exceptional since they are in a conflict state. Mizoram being a peaceful state, we still experience these reductions but with the help of our active Taxation Minister, a positive change is expected.

I am also in favour of the Anti-Corruption Measures and our stance has never changed since our campaign days.

I would also like to state that the Hand-holding Policy is different from NLUP and SEDP. We put ₹200 crores for this and different departments concerning various activities will get involved. Then, regarding the old age pension, I can still picture people clapping their hands during elections when we speak about this. That is exemplified and we keep seeing the reality from now onwards. Regarding the transportation of deceased bodies, we are glad that it is included in our budget since we assumed that the MLAs would give out of their pocket money. In the meantime, I request that since I have heard that morgue vans were bought from MLA funds. It would be great if we included those things in our new scheme. It would ease the burden of the government. It was not bought using their money anyway so why not use it for the good of the people?

Pu Speaker, if we look at the difficulties, there will be many but let's look at the positive side only. Replying to Pu C. Ngunlianchunga's question on whether we could attain our goals or not, only time will tell. Through God's grace and our cooperation, we shall reach the highest.

SPEAKER : Pu TBC Lalvenchhunga, Aizawl West-I.

PU TBC LALVENCHHUNGA: Pu Speaker, thank you. I am glad to sit here today to talk about the Demand for Grants- Budget General Discussion. When we show our agreement towards the budget, it shows our Finance Minister's preparation. It is a 'realistic budget'.

It is obvious that money can be used and dispersed carefully as long as it is spent appropriately. ₹20 crores (which is more than in other years) has been allocated for the constriction of connectivity roads, our promise not to increase the tariffs in power for five years etc. shows that people have hopes for this transparent government. There has

been a great commercial loss in the production and generation of power over the years and infrastructure development is also an urgent need. All these shall be taken care of. In a way, I miss those times when we used to have ₹7000 to ₹8000 crores as budget and around ₹2000 crores as post-devolution revenue deficit grants. But now we have more than crores earmarked as budget and the deficit grants area around ₹1000 crores only; by next year it might decrease to around ₹500 crores. Seeing all these proves the efforts made by the government. It is great to have 19.99% of our revenue deficit from the total revenue deficit which is also 16% of the total consolidated fund. We can see the new form of government aims towards economic development.

We can see better and more detailed budget heads as well. Among these includes 42% earmarked vertical devolution for the three ADCs which was approved by the 2nd Mizoram Finance Commission and approved by the previous administration. 42% to 90% will be the share of the ADCs and when we calculate around 90% of that, it just amounts to around ₹400 crores of our tax collection. The deficit came from the state consolidated funds. So, compared to last year, the administrative funds for the ADCs increased by more than ₹100 crores. This shows how realistic our budget is.

There can be no other balanced budget than this. Our Finance Minister would have liked to allocate more amount for the flagship programmes knowing that we start all these with negative ₹300 crores in our treasury.

It was a lot to keep ₹700 crores to ₹10,000 crores apart in 2019. Knowing that our Finance Minister is also our Chief Minister taking all these things in control and making sure the concerned departments should progress highlights the motives of this government in maintaining finances. The hand-holding policy will also help startups and entrepreneurs which will also add up to our state income.

Pu Speaker, I would like to request the members here today and all those who are watching us to safeguard our laws and policies with us and if we all come together, the government will surely take the right path. Keeping aside our personal desires, overall progress must be kept in mind. In this case, this budget is enough. It is important that things are done as per the laws since it is the most trustworthy.

Since our budget was planned under the influence of the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act (FRBM), we have one more thing left to do. The FRBM mandatorily requires the formation of the Public Expenditure Review Committee and they shall submit their committee reports to the House.

Both the government and the people need to stay transparent and we expect the opposition parties to unanimously pass along with us and to continue cooperating with us. Pu Speaker, thank you.

SPEAKER : Hon. Minister, Pu B. Lalchhanzova, Aizawl East-II.

PU B. LALCHHANZOVA, MINISTER: Pu Speaker, thank you. As a Minister, it might not be the best to keep standing here but since this is my first time, I am obliged to stand here. In the coming budget discussions, I may not do speeches anymore. Let me say that it is an important political history when our Chief minister finally presented the budget for the first time despite some people not believing in him.

The other day I met with a guest from outside the state who told me that he had never heard of our party before and how we were able to form a government. I replied that all those were out of determination and love for the state. Similarly, this budget arose out of willpower and willingness to do good deeds.

Last year, on 13th February 2023, our former CM, Pu Zoramthanga introduced the budget in the House and our current budget was introduced by our CM, Pu Lalduhoma on 27th February 2024. I believe this is an important milestone for the state. I want to let people know that as soon as we formed a new government, there were no instances where people asked us when they would receive this and that much amount of money since we did not make promises that would be hard to fulfil during our campaigns.

As I keep indulging in this budget, I understand that we have to request a huge amount of money from the Central since they are our parents. But, let us know that we must not be too dependent on others. Of course, we have to be mindful of our rights and obligations given by the constitution but thus is our state, we have to wholeheartedly work hard to be able to stand up on our feet.

We heard that our revenue deficit grant keeps decreasing and currently, it is ₹1079 crores. By 2025-2026, it is expected to be ₹586 crores. Let us not be weary of it and patience will be needed.

Pu Speaker, I have to mention how good it is to know that the State Owen Tax Revenue will increase by 22.29%. As seen in our budget, ₹2434.81 crores will be the state revenue that we'll be able to receive. I personally think that it would be great if we could work out at least 30% of our budget. We must learn a lesson about how we must not always be dependent on others.

Yesterday, the ones to your left expressed how ₹200 crores were too low for the hand-holding policy. Let me say that it must not be compared to the SEDP since that one created a lot of confusion. It was said to be 'family-oriented' but then the construction of infrastructures like hospitals was included in SEDP. Such cases are not here anymore in this hand-holding policy. ₹200 crore means ₹200 crores in this case.

Pu Speaker, we keep saying that the budget must be made understandable to the general public. Today, I am glad to have been a part of this Budget. Pu Speaker, as stated frequently by my fellow members, I would also like to comment on 'Gender budgeting'. For the first time, Australia introduced this concept in 1984 and India adopted the same in the 2004-2005 Budget. Among the states, Karnataka was the first one to implement in 2007-08. It is note-worthy that when we say 'gender budgeting' it does not mean equality, rather it connotes equity. This means that the weaker sections (women) must be given special care such as constructing women washroom in the Assembly House. It also includes provisioning seats for women in town bus, city bus etc., and institute certain developmental schemes and privileges specific to women.

Lastly, Pu Speaker, I want to highlight the importance of Mizoram Education Reform Policy that was mentioned in the Budget speech. Learnings from our Delhi training depict that due to a lack in *educational reform*, we have not been able to provide adequate care for our farmers, roads, healthcare etc. The first thing that India need is education, followed by education and lastly comes education. I am glad to find educational reform mentioned in the Budget and thus I fully support it. Thank you.

SPEAKER : Let the Hachhek MLA, Pu Robert Romawia Royte be invited to comment on the Budget.

PU ROBERT ROMAWIA ROYTE: Pu Speaker, thank you. I am glad to speak on the first budget presented by our Chief Minister (also our Finance Minister) this afternoon. I would like to congratulate him on this occasion for being able to present such auspicious Budget by the grace of God.

Firstly, there has been a lot of debates around *Supplementary Demand for Grants*. It includes all the additional funds that departments get in the on-going financial year that requires voting, and also include *Charge Account* which needs to be presented in the House but does not require voting. It requires discussion as it is a part of *Supplementary Demand* presented in front of the House. While taking charge as a Minister of State, I used to encourage my officers to work hard so that we may have numerous *Supplementary Demands* to lay in front of the House. I am delighted to see many Ministers laying *Supplementary Demands* today.

I understand the criticism of *Supplementary Demand*, however without it, I am afraid the ZPM government might fail to deliver what has been promised to the people. There has been an issue in *Supplementary Demand* being circulated over and over again in various Departments without much rationality. Thus, I hold our Chief Minister in good faith and hope that he would bring in better *Supplementary Demand* in the next budget session.

As seen in the paper, the Home Department has ₹5000 lakhs in supplementary demand which I believe was inherited by the present government from the then Home Minister

Pu Lalchamlia and I say this in a light-hearted manner. Let us assume that there are 50 percent of the money left in the single nodal account, which I consider is note-worthy to be highlighted in the Budget speech.

The Agriculture Department has a *Supplementary Demand* of ₹11,000/- lakhs which has been circulated from Planning (among the ₹30,000 lakhs supplementary demand) to Finance and then to Agriculture Department. Let us hope that it stays now and be utilized as provisioned.

For Healthcare, a sum of ₹40 crore is put under the Finance Department as Mizoram Healthcare Society comes under its domain. This money was also circulated around Planning Department with the exact same figure. Likewise, the PWD Department has a supplementary demand of ₹74,702 lakhs of which ₹46,777 lakhs come from SASCI scheme. From my time, the Sports & Youth Services Department has a supplementary demand of ₹2562 lakhs which is carried forward to this year.

I would like to suggest the movements of money (already passed as a state budget) from one department to another to be depicted in a clear manner. I believe it is an important knowledge for all to understand where supplementary demand arises; is it because of good work, central transfer or consolidation of state finances?

Secondly, SASCI has a sanction amount of ₹694 crore of which ₹462 crore has been received. I expect the PWD to have administrative approvals and inviting tenders for the proposed projects as SASCI money have a terrible history of being lapsed during 2008-2009 Congress government. These funds should be taken with a great deal of consideration as it is important for the state development. Thus, with a change in government, I hope the previously accepted work orders are not discontinued.

To add on, *hand-holding policy* simply means ‘helping the needy’. We have seen this policy under Congress government as NLUP and under MNF government as SEDP. It appears that there are differences in what we consider important for the state. I am appalled to see that the ₹15,000 lakhs under SEDP, which was provisioned to take out 60,000 families out of poverty is passed around as a supplementary demand in various departments. Could the government not utilize the said money for the intended beneficiaries? It is also important to device our state budget according to the tune of the Union Budget for better convergences.

There were numerous condemnations towards our previous Chief minister, also the then Finance Department Minister in holding ₹332.47 crores under his hand. However, I believe the present Finance Minister, our Chief Minister has a control of ₹343.813 crores under his department which is ₹10 crores more than the previous government. With regard to *Ways and Means Advances*, this has not been reflected in the budget as it is a short-term loan from the RBI and does not constitute as a ‘*debt stock*’. This makes

the Budget supposedly more credible by conveniently omitting the ₹1000 crores loan in the previous Budget. (**Speaker:** 5 minutes have passed)

Lastly, as expressed in the Governor's speech, brooms and crops were to be purchased by the government '*in this financial year itself*'. I hope that was not just a myth and expect to see effective implementation. The 2nd Finance Commission sanctioned budgets for the 3 ADC's and is reflected in this Budget which makes me glad. Pu Speaker, I extend my full support and hope the Budget is implemented in an effective manner.

SPEAKER : That was 17:12 minutes. Now, let the Aizawl East-III MLA, Pu K. Sapdanga give his comments.

PU K. SAPDANGA, MINISTER: Pu Speaker, thank you. We have heard and support the Budget from all angles even inside and from outside the House. This is my first time sitting in a Session as a first-time MLA, however it has been more than 30 years since I have been in the gallery listening to Budget presentation. For the longest time, Budget was presented in English and since 2013, it was presented in Mizo language. This is crucial for the media houses and for the public as it democratize information for all the people.

One of the most important themes of this year's Budget is '*Sustainable employment generation for the people of Mizoram*'. Even if the Budget contains just these words, it is already fulfilling. Next comes the '*transparent and responsible financial management*' which is important as the people give various taxes and fees such as in land, water, electric and properties. This fosters corruption free government and built a resilient nation. It also talks about how these finances should reach the people and be utilized for the interest of the public at large and institute a robust checking mechanism for the same.

The GDP stands at ₹39,355 crores which is projected to increase by ₹48,037 crores at the end of the year. The public is expected to contribute ₹8,681 crores in which each and every one, inside and outside the state will be important. I have heard that the ruling party block leaders also goes back to actually working in the fields instead of sitting in the office all day.

Mere increase in GDP in value is not important, rather we have to look at the reason why it is increasing. It could be increasing through loans, grants, etc., which will make our debts ever-increasing. Thus, we have said that the previous government has not left us with any money as our current debt stands at ₹14,000 crores.

Thus, Pu Speaker, I am pleased to see that all the Members, even the Opposition bench extended their full support on the Budget. We shall all work for its effective implementation. Thank you.

SPEAKER : I shall invite the Leader of Opposition, Pu Lalthhandama Ralte to comment on the Budget.

PU LALCHHANDAMA RALTE, OPP. LEADER: Pu Speaker, thank you. I am delighted to see that we could have a prosperous discussion on the Budget. I will try to cut my speech short in the interest of time.

Pu Speaker, firstly, I congratulate our Finance Minister, House Leader Pu Lalduhoma for his first Budget presentation. He is an embodiment of hard work and perseverance looking at his political career and this Budget is a milestone for him especially at the age of more than 70.

Secondly, although we have praised the Budget and the current government, it is our responsibility as an opposition party to view the world from another angle and render constructive criticisms. This is the ideals of thriving democracy.

During the previous government, the MNF Ministry could only present one budget which was in 2019. Then comes 2020 and due to COVID 19 pandemic, things were not normal. We suffered in many areas and the latest 2023 Budget was the result of two years of distressed economy. We might not fulfill a lot of aspirations of the people due to the pandemic, thus, I am truly happy for the current government as they could present a Budget without any hindrances.

To overview the Budget, the full Budget is ₹14,412.12 crores in which ₹13,176.85 crores is *voted* and ₹1,235.27 is *charged*. There is an increase of 0.49% from the ongoing Budget which is not very high, however, if implemented effectively, it could be bring significant changes. I have a hopeful expectation that there would be more supplementary demands in the next year's Budget.

Supplementary does not mean mis-administration of funds. Positively speaking, it only means that works and projects have been implemented in an effective manner. However, I have a doubt in mind. The expected State Own Revenue is ₹1,312.42 crores, which is 21.04% more than the current year. Does this mean that the government will increase tax collections? Moreover, the State Own Non-Tax Revenue has an increase of 25.13% in the Budget. Will this raise the price of water bill, electric bill, ILP or lotteries?

Pu Speaker, I would like our House Leader to tell me the current stance of our government on lotteries. Previously, he had criticized organizing lotteries on the basis that it goes against Christian values. However, it is no doubt that this is an important source of non-tax revenue for the state. Additionally, I hope there is a plan to tackle and fix the decreasing nature of Post Devolution Revenue Deficit Grants.

The Budget speech (para 51) highlighted the expected Gross Revenue Expenditure to be ₹11,957.04 crores which is a 6.75% increase from the current Budget Estimate (₹11,200.76 crores). After correcting it with inflation and salaries of government employees, the net amount of revenue expenditure is set to be ₹11,821.54 crores. After Revised Estimate, the current expenditure is at ₹12,509.04 crores. Realistically speaking, this means that the expected Gross Revenue Expenditure for the new Budget is lesser than ₹687 crores than the current year which makes me doubt the credibility of the Budget.

To substantiate the theme of '*Year of Consolidation*', the government pledge to borrow limitedly and will decrease by ₹697.69 crores. The previous government had plan to borrow ₹1000 crores as *Ways & Means Advances* which was decreased to just ₹3 lakhs. As mentioned by the Hachhek MLA, for the convenience of auditing, the AG Office has eliminated the reflection of *Ways & Means Advances* in the Budget. However, these borrowings are crucial to temporarily pay bills and salaries at the beginning of every month. Will the government still borrow through *Ways & Means Advances*? This issue is a bit different from OMB, thus, is the decreased borrowings due to the new Central Financial Rules? What does it mean for the government when the Chief Minister proclaimed at the Lammual Prayer Meeting that they keep ₹1000 crores for the repayment of debts?

Next, there has been a boastful discussion in the House on how this year we will have the least outstanding liabilities. However, I would like to mention that the expected liabilities for the year 2024-2025 is ₹14,034.7 crores which is more than the current year by ₹1,325.5 crores. Thus, although this Budget is a good one, it is concerning that it proposed the highest outstanding liabilities.

SPEAKER : Since the clock has struck 4:00 p.m., the business hour has ended. Shall we resume the discussion? (House agrees). Please continue.

PU LALCHHANDAMA RALTE, OPP. LEADER: Pu Speaker, thank you. I am almost done with my discussion.

I would like our Chief Minister (our Finance Minister) to answer me on one thing. When he was at the opposition bench, there were heated debates on the calculation of GSDP with the then Chef Minister, Pu Zoramthanga. On the 27th of February, he highlighted that there exists a formal system of GSDP calculation from the previous governments. I would like to be aware on what system will this new government employ in the calculation of GSDP? If a new system is put into place, which one is more realistic and reliable?

The government mention that in the new system, everything will be executed after thorough research. However, we could see that at least two projects have already *failed* in the past two months. The Governor in his speech at the First Session of the 9th Mizoram Legislative Assembly (on 12.12.2024) said that the government has kept ₹200

crores for the procurement of crops and other things such as brooms, ginger, turmeric and Mizo bird eye chilies. However, there has not been any advancements in this regard, thus it makes me believe that the supposedly research-based projects failed miserably.

This makes us suspicious of the ‘*hand-holding policy*’ where a huge sum of money has been kept and yet there are no new developments in this regard. The Governor’s speech also underscores that there would be a ‘*responsible government*’ in the State. This is extremely questionable when the government does not take responsibility and put the blame on RR Associates when they could not procure brooms as initially intended. Not only this, the outsiders who were supposed to come for such procurements were allegedly threatened. Why is the Home Minister turning a blind eye on this issue? Is there no good law and order system in this government?

It is such a bleak state of affairs that even these short experiences will ruin the credibility of the government. The farmers are crying for help, and I would like our House Leader to take responsibility of the failure of the ‘hand-holding’ scheme. (**Speaker:** Please conclude as *Business Hours* have ended) Our people need consolation for the hardships they go through for the irresponsible actions of the government, especially the broom cultivators who are in dire need of *price support* for their produce.

To conclude, Pu Speaker, this is a good budget. However, there are numerous rooms for improvement. I would want the House Leader to react to the things I have said in his windup speech. I also want to announce that we are ready to help in every way possible. Thank you.

SPEAKER : 28 Members have spoken and I am glad to see that member participations have been satisfactory. Let the Chief Minister (also the Finance Minister) be invited to give his windup speech for “*The Annual Budget for the year 2024-2025.*”

PU LALDUHOMA, CHIEF MINISTER:

Pu Speaker, thank you.

First of all, I would like to apologize for the incorrect figures and mistakes in the Budget document. In the *Explanatory Memorandum on the Budget 24-25, Budget Summary page 6*, under the ‘Repayment of Loans, Public Debt’ the figure written is ₹42,722.21 lakhs which should be ₹48,083 lakhs. Under Capital Outlay (State), the figure shown is ₹1,70,054.53 lakhs which should be ₹17,305.43 lakhs. Therefore, the Capital Outlay Total should be ₹2,45,508.12 lakhs instead of ₹1,95,375.12 lakhs.

Additionally, Annexure II page 14 has some errors due to missing lines of calculation. Thus, the Capital Disbursement Gross should be ₹2,45,508.12 lakhs and not ₹47,132.21 lakhs. This have a recurring effect on Annexure II Grand Total Revenue & Capital Gross which should be 1,41,212.13 lakhs and not ₹1,24,196.22 lakhs. However, Annexure V,

page 21 is updated correctly and corrections are required only in Page 6 and 14. I truly apologize for the errors and inconveniences caused.

Pu Speaker, I applaud the vivid participation of the Members towards this Budget. I might not be able to react each and every point but I will try to summarize in a concise manner.

Firstly, I find it bothersome to see that there are no recess room and bathroom for women in the Legislative Assembly. Now that we have 3 women MLAs, it is of utmost necessity to have a separate bathroom for women, if not recess room. This would be the responsibility of the Budget Committee and House Committee and I hope they look into it as soon as possible.

As interrogated by the Members on what would be the name of the 'hand-holding' policy. It would be '*Hand-holding Policy*' (*Bana-kaih Policy*) itself. We are going to hold the hands of people who are really trying to succeed in their field. Others consider the money as insufficient but we believe it would be enough for the first year as we are not handing out the money to anyone or only to party workers. The line-departments will select with sincere considerations for the most deserving beneficiaries. This would foster healthy competition among the people.

We are considering for maximum convergence of Central schemes and minimal use of our state revenues. We have also discussed with the banks for its successful implementation. We have assured them that we will help only the sincere candidates who would honestly repay the loans. In the past, there have been people who do not repay their loans properly and this resulted in the mistrust between the government and the banks. Not only this, we will ensure that their works are satisfactory and we will supervise them in their actions. If need arises, we will also have Revised Estimate for our entrepreneurs who have promising projects this year.

It is not right to be in a Zero State category in term of industry, despite all the abundant resources that we possess. Thus, we are also going to initiate Industrialization and formulate an Investment Policy for the first time. We already have contacts of investors not just from the state but from other states and even from foreign countries and corporations. I have been invited as a Chief Guest to many events where I have been enlightened about many industrial policies. Our Investment Policy will first cater to those investors who will utilize our natural raw materials and secondly, we will focus on our youths. We are trying to eliminate those projects which are not recurring in nature such as laying of artificial turfs without proper maintenance and encourage projects which will bring in revenues and be of good utility for the public.

For better monitoring of projects, a State SIT is being in progress of formulation. Like they do in the PMO, the SIT will have a dashboard which will be attached to the Chief Minister Office. This will be implemented shortly and will be of great use for development.

With regards to the purchase of brooms, the government has fully relied on RR Associates who have pledged that they could purchase from the cultivators. Their deficiency was not foreseeable from the research wing. Unfortunately, they could not deliver their promises and the brooms were sold privately by each cultivator. Since there was no proper record of transactions, the government could not reimburse for the same as there could be room for unethical actions. Thus, let this be a great learning curve for the year and from next year, we would conduct thorough area-wise surveys. It deeply saddens us however we have tried our best and will try to do it better in the coming years.

On the issue of transformer, there has been allegations that funds were insufficient. In the past, defective transformers and old machines were purchase with a lot of money. Today, we have kept ₹20 crores and this is comfortable enough in this area. Without corruption, government money could be effectively utilized and in the coming sessions, our concerned Ministers will discuss on the demands for projects regarding solar, hydel and rooftop solar electricity.

The reason why we have kept lesser funds for Roads and Bridges is that there exist NHIDCL and BRO for the same and we are relying on the Central funds for it. If we look at the road density in India, Mizoram has one of the worst roads within 1 km circle. The most troubling part is that the works are extremely unsatisfactory and there are lots of contractors approved by the past government who do not complete their projects. When I visited Delhi, I discussed with officials in the Petroleum Ministry about the state of affairs of Mizoram with respect to petrol and gas reserves. They have identified gas reserves near Meidum but could not start digging the site due to the delay in the completion of Chhimluang bridge. In our emergency meeting with our PWD Minister Pu Vanlalhlana, we have decided to terminate Contractor Kamrula due to insufficient funds and unsatisfactory works. It was decided to invite a new restricted tender due to the urgency of the matter since we want to complete the bridge before the onset of monsoon. If this could be implemented, we would be able to have a pipeline gas system in our household and the state will receive revenues for the same. We have identified around seven to eight petrol and oil seepages in Mizoram and they are very interested and assure me to look further into it and hopefully we would be hearing good news in the future.

When it comes to healthcare, Thorang MLA Pu R. Rohimingliana's statement was correct. There was a problem in using golden card and that was due to a change in the Center but now it functions properly again. There was an issue of shortage of cheap medicines in the canteen. The provisions of cheap medicines were stopped by the previous government but it is now resumed by our Minister. We have also relaxed our provisions for the entitlements of golden card.

We have a plan of formulating a new healthcare scheme which will be completely cashless. The ADB loan taken by the previous government in this regard was a good

step. However, it will take some time for its implementation, until then, the old system will continue to be in effect.

The previous government kept ₹60 crores for the ongoing financial year of which ₹50 crores had been released. We have additionally top up with ₹40 crores which makes the total come up to ₹50 crores. There was delay in releasing of the Bills as these money was reprovisioned from other things. However, I announce that we have release all the ₹50 crores and the public can look forward for their healthcare Bills.

There were questions on SASCI funds and its utilizations. As much as we want to finish using the money, the contractors were all party-workers who could not complete their projects thereby money could not be released. Utilization Certificates were not submitted properly by the contractors and we try our best to release funds for projects which have started their work. Only 53% of funds would be utilized and since we are close to the end of financial year, nothing can be done and this might lead to the lapsing of SASCI funds.

The previous government could only release ₹200 crores from the sanctioned ₹463 crores of which some projects were not even completed..... (*interruption*)

PU LALCHHANDAMA RALTE, OPP. LEADER: When there was a change in government, all SASCI works were put on hold through verbal orders even though they want to continue their works. Now, the contractors were blamed for the inactivity, could this be clarified?

PU LALDUHOMA, CHIEF MINISTER: When the new government was in place, all contractors who have not started their work and not receive work orders were put on hold as we want to collect proper records. Otherwise, we have given an order to 'go ahead' to all other projects and no one was forced to sign a *bill of quantity*... (*interruption*)

PU LALRINSANGA RALTE : Pu Speaker, *Point of clarification* – In certain areas, there have been verbal orders from the EE and SDO to stop many projects which have been 60% to 70% completed and have received *Letter of acceptance* and deposit *performance security*. Could the House Leader clarify on this regard?

PU LALDUHOMA, CHIEF MINISTER: Let me re-iterate on this matter. There are no problems whatsoever for projects which have started their work. We want them to work fast and efficiently. However, there are problems between the Contractors and sub-contractors regarding failure of payment of salaries and bills which delay the project. We want all the projects to be completed as soon as possible and utilize all the SASCI funds in an efficient manner.

Regarding the issue of Lok Ayukta, the Chairman was appointed by the previous government. However, certain Members from the Selection Committee does not want to give their signatures and there were no records of minutes of the meeting. Thus, another meeting of the Selection Committee with the presence of our Opposition Leader decided to form a Search Committee which will submit their recommendations to the Select Committee in sealed envelope. We want an individual with high ethical conduct and no suspicious relationships with the government. This is important as we want a corruption free government in the State.

To clarify the doubts of Siahla MLA, Pu Pawchhua regarding the mismatch of figures in Page 17 of the Explanatory Memorandum, that was only the Expenditure Under State. If we add that with Capital Expenditure CSS of Page 19, the total is indicated in Page 21 which is ₹2,455.08 crores.

Furthermore, election reimbursement is shifted from *1601 GIA from Central Government 06 Grants 101 Central Assistance* to *1601 GIA from Central Government 08 other transfer 113 Special Assistance*. Thus, to eliminate double entry, the *Head of Account* section was added. The amount can be seen in Page 5 of the Annual Financial Statement.

The *Total Revenue Expenditure* of ₹11,957.04 crores in the Budget Speech sl. No. 5 is actually the *Gross Revenue Expenditure*. The *Total Revenue Expenditure* is indicated in page 11 of the Annual Financial Statement. The *Net Revenue Expenditure* is ₹11821.54 crores which is after *Deducted Recoveries* of ₹135.50 crores.

With respect to the absence of Performance Budget, it was excluded due to the abolishment of Planning Board as we do not have plan, non-plan and expenditure receipts anymore.

To answer the Lawngtlai West MLA, Pu Nguna's query regarding District Council, we have not segregate salary and non-salary columns under the *Object Head* anymore and put everything under *General Head* because it was believed that the Council knows better on how to distribute the funds accordingly to the needs of the people.

The complaints regarding the uneven devolution of funds to the 3 ADCs is not under the direct purview of the government. The State only follows the recommendations of the State 2nd Finance Commission.

The total of the consolidated sinking fund is on the higher end which is ₹374.66 crores which is because we have added the previous funds as well. The *Guarantee Redemption Fund* which is ₹52.88 crores should be deducted as rightly mentioned by Pu Nguna. The total also included the MUCO Bank loan of ₹45 crores which should be deducted as well. Also, the more we have *Guarantee Redemption Fund*, the better for the State. It is

deemed to be utilized only on very rare circumstances; however, the previous government drew funds from this fund and we are trying to replenish it as much as we can.

The unfortunate aspect of the Budget is that the *Post Devolution Deficit Grant* has been decreased by 36.06% which is around ₹395 crores. This will ultimately pull down our revenue receipts. However, we cannot do anything about it as this grant was intended to decrease every year until it is discontinued.

Criticisms on the increasing nature of *Revenue Expenditure* is reasonable. We want our expenditure to be less and *Capital Expenditure* to be increasing. However, the reason behind this increase is that we have received more *Revenue Receipts* than the previous year, hence it is only rational to spend more whenever we received more.

One reason why our *Revenue Expenditure* is exorbitantly high is due to the yearly increment of 3% of government employees. Muster Roll have been converted to Provisional Employee, not only this, Pu Speaker, 40% of our Budget is used for *Salary and Pension* which is around ₹400 crores every month. All these factors will consequently increase our *Revenue Expenditure*.

In addition to this, there has been an increase in water and power bills. Our food grain suppliers have also requested to raise their prices as the rate is too low for them to supply. *Administrative Expenditure* is on the rise due to upgradation of government schools which is of utmost necessity. Thus, we cannot help but make peace with the increasing nature of *Revenue Expenditure*.

Our Opposition Leader have asked on the matter of lotteries. Although not ideal for Christians, these lotteries are sold outside the State and the State only receive revenues from it. Therefore, we will be continuing selling lotteries with the same agencies accepted by the previous government.

Other criticisms are about the decreasing nature of *Capital Expenditure*. This is due to the fact that the government announced *Year of consolidation and Austerity measures*. The *Capital Expenditure* decreased by ₹686 crores. It is also to be noted that the opening balance was ₹-389.89 crores which pushed us to the brink and thereby such measures have to be taken to save the economy.

It is true that our *Consolidated debt* is extremely high as aforementioned by our Opposition Leader as well. This is because we inherit a debt of ₹13,584.80 crores from the previous government. If we pay all our debts which is around 97% of the Budget, we will not even have one month salary for our employees. Pu Speaker, to carry on the work, we have to mandatorily borrow some amount which in turn increases our *Consolidated debt*.

To clarify some doubts, as highlighted by Pu. C. Lalsawivunga, I want to say that as per my document, the RBI Statement (16.1.2023) our State have the highest debt – 56.7% in 2021, 55.7% in 2022 and 53.1% in 2023. To quote the then Finance Minister, “Mizoram have the highest debts among all the State Legislative.” I could even send you a copy of it, thus, I request all the Members to speak only the complete truth in the House.

The previous government borrow ₹3,246.71 crores, and we are trying to borrow ₹1992.03 crores and the difference is ₹1254.68 crores. This is because the government believes that financial reform is the need of the hour. If we do not have reformation, we would collapse in the future. The previous government have not completely borrowed the expected ₹1,200 crores in this financial year; thus, we are not trying to borrow all the money and reject ₹299 crores. We are holding back on irresponsible borrowings as we consider that CSS, Externally Aided Project and loans with minimal interests will be more beneficial for us as they can also generate revenues for the state. We are not initiating big projects this year as we want to consolidate our positions for a better future.

Discussion on *Ways & Means Advances* seems trivial, but this is an important issue. This is to be borrowed only as a last resort when the state extinguishes all its funds and loans. The previous government kept ₹1000 crores which shows the unstable nature of the economy under their government. The 2024-2025 Budget keeps 43 lakhs for *Ways & Means Advances*. It is of the opinion of the present government to not rely on it as much as possible as we have suffered the consequences of irresponsible borrowings of the past till today. We were in a situation of *overdraft* for 9 days at the start of our government which was extremely stressful. Therefore, the money has not been reflected in our Budget as it is not a norm. The previous government made it reflected in the previous Budget which was just a costume of trying to look good from the purview of the people.

If we borrow *Ways & Means Advances* for 3 months, we have to pay reappropriate interest for it. If we cannot repay the loan by 3 months, we pay reappropriate rate plus 1%. On the 100th day, it increases to 2% and exceeding it will incur an interest of reappropriate rate plus 5%. Failure to repay these advances will lead to a situation of *overdraft* wherein our Treasury will be closed and no money would be released. Thus, we are not relying on these advances as much as possible and if need arises, we would take only very minimal amount of it.

Pu Speaker, despite all that, we have many projects to inaugurate today. These include – the Hnahthial hospital, Khawzawl hospital and Saitual hospital of 50 beds each. Additionally, the Mamit Water Supply Scheme part-II, Aizawl by-pass (western side), 132 Kv Line (Bairabi-West Phaileng) and the Mualkung Gas Bottling Plant have been completed in which we are waiting for a response from the Prime Minister to inaugurate these projects either in person or through virtual means.

I am glad to announce that ₹1,311.28 crores have been released for the Aizawl by-pass Eastern-side as a result of my communication with Pu Nitin Gadkaria in Delhi. This was the initiative of the previous government and I would like to thank them for their initiative. Adding on to this, money sanctioned for NHIDCL road from Kawnpui – Sairang (₹1,742.11 crores) and Aizawl PM-DeVINE funds (₹500 crores) have been released.

With respect to ZMC, I feared that we would not be awarded with the right certifications when inspection occurs. Our Health Minister Pi Rinpuii has worked tirelessly and in contact with our Union Home Minister who asked for a project proposal of ₹300 crores for the development of our Medical College. As of now, we have completed proposals for the first installment which is around ₹119 crores.

With the abled initiative of our ODS – Officer on Special Duty Pu Jonathan, who drew a salary of Re.1, we have received ₹40 crores from the Union DM&R Minister. On an extremely short notice, he went to Delhi to finish all the nitty-gritties. This money will be used for Disaster Management and the Fire Department will be its beneficiary.

We have also received additional funds for the District Council & Minority Affairs Department under PMJVK. Concept paper was urgently formulated for the reconstruction of Vanapa Hall and the project estimate is around ₹37 crores.

I have discussed with the Finance Minister, Minister of State and Union Ministers for various projects for the state. The fruit of these meetings is the ₹55 crores projects for establishing libraries in 300 villages and distributing computer systems. We have received the 1st installment of ₹27 crores and this will be implemented through the DC. They were ready to release the 2nd installment but we could not initiate the projects due to time crunch.

There was a mention of Development Bank, of which we are not in a hurry to establish it. However, the Finance Minister assure me that loans will be given without interest through the state bank. This will be operated through the CMO and will be given to deserving candidates, however the amount is yet to be revealed.

I have also requested the Finance Minister to eliminate the presentation of Income Tax Return for our Mizo contractors and suppliers as they have been exempted. As of now, they have sent out instructions to the banks for the same and I have yet to receive the copy of it. I requested that the MRB employees should receive the same allowances and emoluments as that of the employees of state bank. Upon my appeal, *special recruitment rules* are on the way so that we can see more Mizos in our rural banks.

The Center also open wide doors for CSR funds. It is of best interest if the CSR comes under CMO and this system of centralization will help the sincere beneficiaries. Under SASCI, we have received ₹275 crore again and reports have to be given in an urgent

manner. I discussed with the Chief Secretary during recess and the projects that have been approved are – re-construction of Central and 7 district jail (₹55 crores), Aizawl Water Supply Construction (₹16.50 crores), Lunglei Water Supply Scheme (₹55.70), Aizawl Water Supply Scheme (₹47.80 crores), teacher quarters (₹31.50 crores), reforming of ITI Centers (₹25 crores), Tuirial 60 Mega Watt (₹28 crores) and construction of Govt. Residential Quarter Type 5 and 6 (₹15.44 crores).

We have relied on God and not Delhi for our strength. We believe in the words “*Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit*” which guide our footsteps in every direction.

It is great to see that our *Revenue Receipts* are increasing. With this, we could sanction a lot of money for Social Service Sector, which is around ₹400 crores and towards the Economic Sector which is around ₹400 crores. Overall, the development expenditure constitutes 57.22% of the total Budget. It has been advised by the Central government to keep the *fiscal deficit* below 3%. This was not followed by the previous government and the on-going deficit stands at 4.73 of GSD. This Budget and our government projected a *fiscal deficit* of 2.84% which is well below 3%.

Not only this, we have a *Revenue Surplus* and we expect a GSDP growth rate of 11% this year. Pu Speaker, the previous government kept ₹1,696.67 crores for *capital outlay* while this Budget sees a *capital outlay* of ₹1,953.75 crores, which is ₹257 crores more than the previous Budget. This is an important because it points to actual developmental work of the government. We also expect to raise our GSDP to ₹8,681 crores this year. Regarding the Village Council, the 15th Finance Commission had given RLB grant of ₹34.50 crores in 2021-22 and ₹35.50 crores as 1st installment in 2022-23. However, no money had been given to the Village Council till today (almost 3 years) which crippled the functioning of RLBs. We have requested our Finance officers to help out the LAD in this regard and we hope to see positive results very soon.

Pu Speaker, lastly, I am pleased to see how thankful the Members are in terms of commencing a Project Monitoring Committee. Now that we have given general consent to CBI, I believe we are all glad to see that we have a government that pledge to be efficient and free of corruption. Also, I am glad to see that our work culture has been reformed with the introduction of biometric attendance system. With its effective implementation, it will be beneficial for the public at large if the government employees are punctual and ethical.

One thing that is considered a great initiative by all is the provisioning of vehicles to carry dead bodies. There have been suggestions to include patients as well. I believe the concerned Minister will take a note on this and make necessary changes in the guidelines. I also request the full cooperation and guidance from the Opposition parties as well. The increase in Old Age Pension has been taken with a positive tone by everyone. I am glad to hear that all commentaries on the Budget give credit to its innovativeness and

creativity. It makes me happy to see all the positive mindsets by all the Member sin the House. As we are trying to foster people-centric government, I request all the Members to work in full cooperation and with full harmony for the effective implementation of the Budget.

As pledged before God and the people of the state, let us all work in consonance for development putting away our petty self-interests. With the minimal resources that we possess, we can still bring great changes among the people. I personally thank all the Members who have wished me for my success after all the hard times that I have gone through to stand in front of you all today.

To conclude, I remember what the Dampa MLA, Pu Lalrintluanga Sailo have remarked on the Budget. He said that the Budget is like a bachelor's love letter. I think that encapsulates the nature of this Budget really well. Thus, I invite everyone to help me in passing this Budget. Thank you.

SPEAKER : That's great. The Budget has received great comments and constructive criticisms from all ends even from the people at my left. Concluding remarks have been on a positive tone which pleads for greater collaborations among all the stakeholders.

In total, 28 Member have commented on the Budget. One notable MLA who have used his time efficiently is Pu K. Hrahmo, Palak MLA. The champion in today's time adhearing MLA is the Dampa MLA, Pu Lalrintluanga Sailo who have requested the person beside him to talk on his behalf on the graving issue of drugs menace in West Phaileng.

We have come to the end of today's Business. The sitting will be continued tomorrow that is March 6th, 2024 (Wednesday) at 10:30 a.m.

The sitting is adjourned. (5:15 PM)