



JOINT SESSION OF THE MAHARASHTRA LEGISLATURE AT BOMBAY

ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

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GOVERNOR OF MAHARASHTRA

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Mr. Chairman, Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

I extend to you a warm welcome to this Session of the Legislature.

2. As you know the State has been passing through an unprecedented crisis caused by the third successive drought this year. The failure of the monsoon has affected crops in many areas of the State where agricultural operations have come to a halt, water has become scarce and fodder for the cattle is in short supply. The economic life of over 20 million people in these villages has been seriously affected. At no time before has the crisis been so acute. For the scarcity-affected people, it is indeed a struggle for survival.

3. In most parts, the kharif crops have almost failed and even the paddy crop in the Konkan and parts of East Vidarbha has been damaged this year. Nearly 70 per cent of the normal kharif crop of jowar, bajri and groundnut in the State is lost. The rabi rains have also failed and the prospects for the rabi crop have also become bleak.

4. My Government started relief works on a large scale in the scarcity-affected areas to provide employment to the drought-affected people and to enable them to earn their livelihood through work. The intensity of the distress caused by the drought can be judged from the fact that over two and a quarter million people are already engaged on the relief works throughout the State. It is expected that the number will increase still further. Until the monsoon breaks out in June and for some time thereafter till normal agricultural operations can be resumed, we shall have to pass through a very anxious time and we shall need courage, determination and hard work to sustain us in our efforts.

5. Most of the employment provided to the people has been generated through productive works such as soil conservation, construction of percolation tanks, nalla and contour bunding, digging of community wells, canal excavation, lift irrigation schemes and improvement of communications. It has also become necessary for the State Government to start work in a big way on major schemes and take advance action on several medium and major projects. As a result of the efforts of the State Government, the Prime Minister and the Railway Minister have announced their intention to start four rail projects in the Maharashtra State. We are expecting an early commencement of work on these projects.

6. Compared to the previous years, the situation regarding drinking water and fodder is very serious this year. The water scarcity is acutely felt in the worst affected nine districts viz. Aurangabad, Bhir, Osmanabad, Ahmednagar, Satara, Sangli, Pune, Sholapur and Nasik. Every source of water is, therefore, being tapped and efforts are being made to revitalise and replenish the existing sources by a massive programme of energising old wells. To supplement the rigs which we already have, we have placed orders for acquiring new rigs from indigenous and foreign sources. We expect to get them shortly.

7. The failure of the rains has also caused acute shortage of fodder for cattle. My Government has sanctioned 250 cattle camps in various forest areas where water and fodder are available and where about 3,50,000 cattle could be provided sustenance. Of these, about 2 lakh cattle will be accommodated in the camps in the Vidarbha districts. In some irrigated areas, with the help of the sugar factories, a cattle feed consisting of bagasse, molasses, sugras and urea is also being provided to cattle in the cattle camps. Arrangements are also being made to bring fodder from Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat.

8. To prevent the adverse effects of mal-nutrition, a programme of providing nutritious food has been undertaken in the scarcity-affected areas. A beginning has been made to distribute sukhadi, a nutritious food, to workers in the worst affected areas. Arrangements are also being made to provide prompt and regular medical aid to the people working on relief projects.

9. For those who are unable to work on the relief projects due to old age or infirmity, Government is providing gratuitous relief. Collectors have been given instructions to ensure expeditious provision of gratuitous relief wherever necessary. Village Panchayats have also been instructed to report to the Revenue Authorities instances requiring immediate relief.

10. The Government of India have been very considerate in granting assistance to our State to meet the crisis. During this year, the Central Government has provided the State Government with a grant of Rs. 17 crores, a ways and means advance of Rs. 7 crores and a short-term loan of Rs. 4 crores for seeds and fertilisers. The State Government has already spent Rs. 38.25 crores on scarcity relief operations upto the 15th January 1973. My Government is extremely grateful to the Prime Minister not only for all that she has done to assist the State Government in its relief works but for sparing her valuable time to see for herself the difficult conditions through which the State is passing and to extend comfort and sympathy to the people in their distress.

11. To meet a calamity of these dimensions, help of non-official organisations has also been enlisted. The Chief Minister's appeal to industrialists, philanthropists and organisations of employers and workers has received an encouraging response. The Maharashtra Scarcity Relief Committee has been constituted to collect donations to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. The Committee has been very helpful in supplementing the efforts of the Government in providing medical assistance in the scarcity-affected areas and tankers for transport and supply of water. The Committee has fixed a target of Rs. 10 crores for the Chief Minister's Relief Fund and so far over Rs. one crore have already been collected.

12. In a way, our difficulties are both a challenge and an opportunity. They have enabled us to mobilise considerable self-help. As an insurance against the vagaries of Nature next year, we have been able to stockpile resources and equipment and undertake many land improvement schemes by survey of ground water availability, provision of water storages both for irrigation and for increasing the sub-soil level of water by percolation. It is a matter of pride that the people in the scarcity-affected areas

have taken up bravely the challenge of adversity in the true spirit and tradition of Maharashtra. In this, the people of the State and the Government stand solidly behind them, and I have no doubt that with our united efforts we will surmount the present crisis.

13. On the failure of the kharif rains, a Centrally-sponsored Emergency Agricultural Production Programme was undertaken in the hope that at least the rabi rains would be favourable and that it would help us to make up to some extent the deficiency of the kharif production. For this purpose, a short-term loan of Rs. 16 crores has been sanctioned to the State by the Government of India. Likewise, a financial outlay of approximately Rs. 25 crores for 13 schemes has been approved by the Government of India as a loan repayable in 15 annual instalments. My Government is proceeding energetically with the implementation of all the approved schemes. Unfortunately, the rabi rains also failed us. Otherwise, the impact of all these works undertaken under the Emergency Agricultural Production Programme would have been manifestly felt and appreciated. However, the works are of a lasting benefit to the State and would undoubtedly help in stabilising agriculture in many areas of uncertain rainfall.

14. The Maharashtra Agricultural Credit Project as sanctioned by the International Development Association has become effective from 30th January 1973. Through this Project, an assistance of the order of \$30 million would be available for minor irrigation schemes like construction of tube wells, dug wells (with pump-sets) including improvement of existing wells and lift irrigation schemes and development programmes in command areas of irrigation projects. My Government expects to complete a programme of 12,800 new wells before the end of March 1974. We also hope and plan to expand the scope of this programme so as to provide a firm base for an effective long-range solution to meet the problem of recurrent droughts and scarcity in the State. The State Land Development Bank is the principal agency through which this programme will be implemented. My Government has taken all the necessary steps like setting up of the Land Development Agency and Groundwater Survey and Development Agency and improvement of financial and structural health of the institutions involved in the programme for effective implementation of this programme.

15. The food situation in the State since September 1972 has become critical owing to increasing off-takes and depletion of the stocks of foodgrains in the districts. To augment the stocks, my Government has continued the scheme of monopoly procurement of paddy, rice, jowar and nagli from the local producers. We have been approaching the Government of India from time to time for larger foodgrain allotments. However, they have not been able to allot to us all the quantities that we have been asking for. We hope that the position both as regards the quantity and the timely despatch of foodgrains to the destinations in our State will improve.

16. My Government has taken steps to increase the production of sugar in the State. We have decided to contribute to the share capital of new sugar factories licensed in 1969-70 and onwards at the rate of Rs. 45 lakhs and Rs. 60 lakhs per factory in the developed and under-developed areas respectively.

17. Despite the difficulties caused by the failure of the rains, my Government has succeeded in fulfilling its developmental programme under the annual plan for 1972-73. It is expected that the expenditure on the plan during the current year would exceed the targeted outlay of Rs. 205 crores approved by the Planning Commission. The strategy for the next year's annual plan, which is the last year of the current plan, has been oriented to emphasize the 15-point programme, to generate employment opportunities for the maximum number of people and to meet the minimum needs of the population in respect of drinking water supply, primary education, housing, slum-clearance, etc. My Government has been giving the highest priority to schemes which would generate employment in the State. Towards this objective, a programme has been taken up to complete the irrigation schemes ahead of the schedule. In this programme, 69 minor irrigation works, 8 medium irrigation works and 415 lift irrigation schemes are expected to be completed by May 1973. This will provide an additional irrigation potential to the extent of about 188,000 hectares. About 1,500 minor irrigation works in the local sector also are proposed to be completed by 31st March 1973 so as to provide an additional irrigation potential of about 65,000 hectares of cultivable land. We expect significant additions to the employment of man-power under all these works.

18. The irrigation, power, water supply and agricultural university projects in the State involve an acquisition of a large acreage of agricultural lands and submergence of a number of gaothans. The Government has decided to resettle the affected agriculturist families by granting them alternative lands both for house-sites and for cultivation. So far the Directorate of Resettlement set up by the Government has re-settled about 33,000 families affected by the projects in the State and further work is in progress.

19. To make available house-sites free of cost to the families of the landless workers in the rural areas of the State, a massive programme has been taken up. It envisages allotment of about 500,000 house-sites during a period of three years. Similarly, lands are being distributed to the landless persons to provide them with the means of livelihood.

20. Considerable progress has been made in the State towards provision of piped water supply to the people. During 1972-73, 1,251 such schemes are in progress. During 1973-74, nearly 895 spill-over schemes in addition to the new schemes are intended to be financed. The programme is supplemented by the efforts of the Zilla Parishads who will be implementing the programmes of well construction.

21. Provision of milk under hygienic conditions is an essential item in the programme of my Government for improving the facilities in Greater Bombay. A modern dairy with a handling capacity of 2 lakh litres of milk a day has been completed in Dhulia and the processed milk and milk products manufactured at the dairy are transported to Bombay. Under the "Operation Flood" programme, it has been decided to establish a third dairy at Kurla in Bombay, which will be the first 'mother dairy' in the country. Its processing capacity would be 4 lakh litres of milk a day. It is expected that the project will be complete by August 1973. With the commissioning of the third dairy and the completion of the expansion programme of the Aarey and Worli dairies, the distribution of milk in Greater Bombay by the Greater Bombay Milk Scheme would touch 11 lakh litres of milk a day. Another project, which is proposed in the Co-operative Sector, is the Jalgaon Dairy Project. This will be a feeder dairy with the processing capacity of 50,000

litres of milk a day. The feeder dairy would be provided with a plant for manufacture of skimmed milk powder and butter in the flush season. It is expected to commission the dairy within a period of two years.

22. As regards augmentation of other facilities for urban areas, various steps have been taken. The World Bank Team has submitted its feasibility report regarding Bombay's Water Supply and Sewerage Projects, which are together estimated to cost Rs. 421 crores and the projects await financial assistance from the International Development Association. The State Government has decided to grant Rs. 6.5 crores to the Bombay Municipal Corporation towards the distribution part of the water supply project. Government has advised all Municipal Corporations and Municipal Councils on 7th April 1972 and again on 12th October 1972 regarding the measures to be adopted for tiding over the drinking water scarcity from now to end of May 1973. Government has allotted Rs. 40 lakhs to the Divisional Commissioners to be disbursed to the Municipal Councils for deepening wells, sinking new wells, hiring water tankers and for emergency water supply schemes. For the current financial year, the Life Insurance Corporation has agreed to sanction, on State Government's guarantee, an aggregate loan of Rs. 89 lakhs for 25 existing municipal water supply schemes.

23. The work of survey of the fishing grounds in the deep sea off the Maharashtra coast was taken up in April 1972. The New Maharashtra Fisheries Development Corporation is expected to pursue this work and actual offshore and deep sea fishing operations and also help fishermen in marketing, processing and export of their catch.

24. Special attention has been paid to quantitative and qualitative improvement in the sphere of education. The pupil-teacher ratios have been improved by appointment of 4,885 and 6,592 primary teachers during 1971-72 and 1972-73 respectively, to make up the deficit of 16,000 teachers. Trained graduate headmasters are being appointed to primary schools and Standards V, VI and VII are being manned with trained graduate teachers by attaching these classes to High Schools. Maharashtra won in 1972-73 the World UNESCO Shaharaza Pahlvi Prize for its adult literacy

programme which is being spread in other regions with redoubled Central assistance. Particularly, the programme of functional literacy for neo-literates and utilisation of radio and T.V. media for education generally are under active implementation. Sandwiched courses for diploma in civil, mechanical and electrical engineering as also correspondence courses are being conducted by the Department of Technical Education. The University of Bombay is conducting correspondence courses in the Faculty of Arts and Commerce. Co-ordination of scientific research and its utilisation is being attempted through a High Power Committee with the Chief Minister as the President. A draft of a comprehensive, uniform and broad-based Universities Act has been prepared and it is proposed, if the Government of India and the Planning Commission give their concurrence, to set up two additional universities in Vidarbha and North Maharashtra with the object of relieving the congestion of affiliated colleges in the jurisdiction of Poona and Nagpur Universities. Efforts are being made to secure assistance from the Central Government for setting up a Sanskrit Vidyapeeth in the State. Government has taken care to extend pension facilities to primary and secondary teachers who retired after 1947 and did not get the benefit of the pension scheme made applicable from 1961.

25. For the welfare of the backward classes, my Government has introduced several programmes and projects. Amongst the important schemes I might mention the Area Development Approach (the Ashram complex), the setting up of the Tribal Development Corporation and the establishment of District Level Committees for investigation into complaints made by the members of the backward classes and scheduled tribes. In fulfilment of the assurance given to the Legislature, a Committee has been set up with Shri Page as the Chairman to suggest ways and means of eradicating untouchability and preventing harassment and exploitation of Harijans.

26. For the improvement of slums and slum areas in the State, my Government has decided to establish a separate Board to execute the projects. The Board will provide basic amenities in the slums such as water, light, communications, sanitary arrangements, etc.

27. My Government has been successful in obtaining from the Life Insurance Corporation of India an assurance of a loan of Rs. 3 crores to the Maharashtra Housing Board, for its housing schemes which help the lower income and middle income groups. The State Government has also made arrangements to sanction about Rs. 86 lakhs as loans through the Maharashtra Co-operative Housing Finance Society, against Government guarantee for construction of 1,180 tenements for the members of the backward classes co-operative housing societies. The proposed target of 1,500 tenements for the current year under this programme is expected to be achieved.

28. The closure of the sick textile mills was a matter of grave concern to my Government. At present 25 textile mills in the State are being managed by the State Government which provide employment to about 50,000 workers. I am happy to say that almost all the sick mills have made some profits during the year 1972. In accordance with the policy of the Government to accord to the workers participation in the management, representatives of the workers have been included in the local committees set up in the mills and a Worker-Director has been appointed on the Board of the Maharashtra State Textile Corporation.

29. As Honourable Members are aware, the State Government has adopted a policy of dispersal of industries to under-developed areas which is being implemented through special organisations such as the MIDC and SICOM and through the package scheme of incentives. The MIDC has so far established 25 industrial areas and proposes to set up another 20 areas in addition.

30. The schemes for prospecting and exploration of minerals under the auspices of the Directorate of Geology and Mining are being continued in the mineral-bearing areas of the State. The two Mineral Survey Units—one for the Konkan area and the other for Jalgaon-Nasik-Dhulia areas—have started functioning at Ratnagiri and Jalgaon respectively.

31. I have been watching keenly the progress of the family planning programme in the State and I am happy to say that Maharashtra continues to be one of the leading States in this respect.

You will no doubt notice that the programme has reached all sections and strata of the society including the difficult section of the slum-dwellers. So far, more than 2 million sterilisation operations have been performed in the State. There is, however, an urgent need to make an all-out effort further to intensify the programme.

32. The work on the improvement of communications within the State has progressed satisfactorily. During 1972-73, Rs. 13 crores are expected to be spent on the National Highways. The Bombay-Malshet Ghat-Ahmednagar Highway will be declared open for traffic during 1973-74. The work of surveying the Rewas-Redi Coastal Highway commenced in 1972-73. The construction of the West Coast Highway will assist the economic development of the inaccessible areas in the Konkan region. The all-weather air-fields at Ratnagiri and Jalgaon are also expected to be completed by May 1973. Two similar air-fields are being constructed at Dhulia and Osmanabad for running passenger planes of the DC-3 (Dakota) variety.

33. The work on the Project for New Bombay City has also made progress. A township at Washi near the end of the Thana Creek Bridge and construction of a bridge on Panvel Creek has been taken in hand. Planning of the Central Business District at Shahabaj is in progress. Likewise new townships are being built around our major urban centres. Work on the new Aurangabad project is about to begin and survey of a new township near Nasik is nearing completion.

34. The Honourable Members are aware that the Government has been trying to reduce its expenditure on rented accommodation in the Bombay City by its own construction programme. Though the multi-storied administrative building opposite the Sachivalaya is expected to be completed by March 1974, four floors will be available for occupation very soon. Government has also decided to construct an administrative building in the New Bombay City. Some of the Government offices which are at present in rented premises in Bombay City will be shifted there.

35. The programme of rural electrification, I am glad to say, has received considerable impetus due to the efforts of my Government. As a result of the crash programme undertaken by the

Maharashtra State Electricity Board, it is expected that 1,351 more villages will be electrified; over 70 per cent of the population in the State will have been covered by 1973-74. By 1972-73 the Board had given electric connections to nearly 2,40,000 irrigation pumps.

36. The present Session has been summoned mainly to pass the budget estimates for the next year. Three Bills are pending before the State Assembly viz.—

1. The Maharashtra Slum Improvement Board Bill, 1972.
2. The Maharashtra Public Services Subordinate Selection Boards Bill, 1972.
3. The Indian Partnership (Maharashtra Amendment) Bill, 1972.

It is also proposed to take up the following Bills in the current session if there is adequate time:—

1. A Bill to amend the Bombay Public Trusts Act, 1950.
2. A Bill in respect of Pandharpur Temple based on the recommendations of the Nadkarni Commission.
3. A Bill to amend the Jamshetjee Jejeebhoy Baronetcy Act, 1915 and Petit Baronetcy Act, 1893.
4. Bombay Village Panchayats (Postponement of Elections) Bill—to provide for conversion of Ordinance.
5. A Bill to regulate and control the working of the Chit Funds in the State.
6. A Bill to amend the Bombay Sales Tax Act, 1959.
7. A Bill to amend section 14 of the Bombay Sales Tax Act, 1959 and validation provision to provide for conversion of Ordinance.
8. A Bill to amend the Bombay Land Improvement Schemes Act, 1942.
9. A Bill to amend section 9 of the Bombay Motor Vehicles Tax Act, 1958.

10. A Bill to amend the Bombay Building Repairs and Reconstruction Board Act.
11. A Bill to extend the life of Bombay Rents, Hotel and Lodging House Rates Control Act, 1947.
12. A Bill to amend the Maharashtra Apartment Ownership Act, 1970.
13. A Bill to amend the Maharashtra Land Revenue Code, 1966 and Rents Control Acts.

37. Honourable Members, I have enunciated the policies and programmes of my Government for the speedier implementation of which the Government is committed and I have no doubt that my Government can count on the fullest co-operation from all of you.