



JOINT SESSION OF THE MAHARASHTRA LEGISLATURE AT BOMBAY

ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

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Mr. Chairman, Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

You are meeting very soon after the earth-quake calamity which struck Koynanagar in December last. It seems that nature is posing every now and then a challenge to the people of this State. No one thought that the Deccan Plateau, which was supposed to be immune from the ravages of earth-quakes, would experience a shock of such intensity. A large-scale destruction of life and property took place in a wide area. The damage has been particularly heavy and concentrated in the Satara and Ratnagiri districts.

2. It is, however, gratifying to see that the morale of those who suffered so grievously has remained so high. It was also with great pride that we have watched the courage and devotion to duty shown by the public servants in that area and especially the engineers and other staff in-charge of the Koyna dam and the Pophali power station. The response of the people of the State in the hour of need of their brethren in the affected areas was as spontaneous and generous as ever.

3. My Government is fully aware of the tremendous task of rehabilitation which it will have to tackle. Expeditious steps have already been taken to render immediate relief. A special programme has been undertaken to supply building material for reconstructing or repairing the damaged houses. Providing shelter is indeed a race against time as the affected region is a heavy rainfall area. Special types of houses would have to be designed for being constructed to withstand earthquake tremors. The total liability for the permanent rehabilitation of the people affected would naturally be very high. It can be tackled by Government only with the help of the Government of India and also with the active co-operation of and contributions by the people.

4. It is indeed most fortunate that no serious damage appears to have been caused to the Koyna dam and the Pophali power-house complex. In itself, this is a tribute to the engineering staff responsible for the design and construction of these structures. Both the dam and the power-house have been examined by the

top-most engineers and technicians in the country. Detailed surveys are being carried out with a view to finding out what protective and precautionary measures would still be necessary. My Government assures that it would implement all these measures expeditiously.

5. Nature had appeared to be more kind to us till September last as far as agricultural production was concerned. Till that time, the rainfall was normal and timely over a major portion of the State. A period of drought, however, followed. Thereafter came the unusual rains and hailstorms over wide areas. This was followed by a spell of mild to severe cold waves. All this seriously affected the good harvest which we were expecting till then because of Government's three pronged programme to increase agricultural production by developing lands, increasing irrigation facilities and popularising use of hybrid seed. Government efforts in this respect were more than matched by the enthusiastic popular response. Government is, therefore, hopeful of overcoming this temporary set-back.

6. In view of the possibility of growing hybrid food crops as a mixed crop with sugarcane, Government decided to restore the cut in sugarcane acreage during 1967-68 on the condition that the irrigators should cultivate hybrid Jowar and Bajra in the sugarcane area to be newly planted or in ratoon as a mixed crop. Government also continued the concession of free water supply to food crops in kharif and rabi seasons and hybrid crops in all seasons of the irrigation year 1967-68.

7. Government has also decided to assist the project of setting up a fertiliser factory in the State in the co-operative sector by giving it share capital contribution. Smaller units of fertiliser mixture factories are also being helped in the same sector.

8. It has been decided to expand the Area Integrated Programme for increased agricultural production and start one such unit in each of the districts. Experimental demonstration centres have already been started in 10 irrigation projects.

9. Government has formulated a new scheme for providing finances to the fisheries co-operatives on a par with the agricultural co-operatives. Under this scheme, district co-operative banks will get loans for development of fisheries from the Apex Bank with

a reduced rate of interest of 4.25 per cent, and thereby with proportionate reduction in the rate of interest to the actual borrower. Liberal medium and long term loans for the purchase of boats and marine engines will also now be made available to the groups of fishermen's co-operatives. Government has also prepared two co-operative projects in Ratnagiri and Thana districts with the help of the Agricultural Refinance Corporation.

10. A poultry dressing plant which will treat about 8,000 birds per day is nearing completion in Poona. The first bacon factory in India which will treat about 100 pigs per day is being set up at Borivli near Bombay. Both these projects are expected to go into production during the next year.

11. The Dapchari Milk Project in Thana District is making satisfactory progress. The first unit housing 1,000 heads of cattle is expected to be ready during 1968-69.

12. Till the full impact of this year's crop is felt, Government has to husband carefully the stocks of the internally procured foodgrains as also those received from the Government of India. This would be achieved through equitable distribution of available stocks and curbs on ostentatious consumption. I am glad to say that in spite of the difficult food situation, it has been possible to run the rationing system in a satisfactory manner thereby isolating the higher purchasing-power pockets from the rural producing areas. The internal procurement started very well with the commencement of the procurement season. Unseasonal and heavy rains in the latter half of December, however, affected the standing kharif Jowar crop almost ready for harvest, and impeded the harvesting and threshing operations. As a result, the procurement of kharif Jowar has received some set-back. Government, however, hopes that procurement will now gain a fresh momentum and last year's achievements will be exceeded substantially. The quantity of paddy so far procured has nearly reached last season's total achievements. It is expected that the total quantity of paddy that would be procured this season would be nearly double that of the last year. Government has increased the prices to be offered to the cultivators for paddy and hybrid Jowar.

13. Government is fully conscious of the rising price-line and is making all efforts possible to help stabilise it within the regulatory

powers available with it. Government was thus able successfully to control the prices of gur under the Maharashtra Gur and Khand-sari Dealers Licensing Order. Government has also actively encouraged the participation of co-operative stores in the field of sale of the necessities of life at reasonable prices. There are four departmental stores in big cities and 42 wholesale stores at other places with 385 branches. There are about 1400 Consumers' Stores also at the village and taluka levels. In addition, 24,000 fair-price shops have been functioning for the sale of food-grains at controlled rates. In the case of edible oils, Government is making all efforts to urge on the Government of Gujarat to remove all restrictions on the movement of such oils and also to allot a substantial portion of such oils and oil-seed procured by that Government, to this State.

14. I had already mentioned that the expected good harvest of this year was seriously affected because of the vagaries of the rainfall in the latter portion of the season. To do away with this dependence, Government continued its efforts to increase the irrigation facilities through various measures. The new irrigation potential created by minor irrigation works during the year was expected to be 21000 acres while a target of 34000 acres is fixed for the next year. The target under the major and medium irrigation works for the next year is fixed at 1.4 lakh acres. Minor works irrigating upto 250 acres and lift irrigation works costing upto Rs. 5 lakhs are entrusted to the Zilla Parishads. The works are fully financed by Government and increased allotments are being placed at the disposal of the Zilla Parishads to complete expeditiously all the works in progress as also to take up a number of new works. So far, the irrigation potential created by these works is about 2 lakh acres.

15. The rural electrification scheme continues to make satisfactory progress.

Government is aware of certain difficulties in the Vidarbha and Marathwada areas regarding supply of electricity. The State Electricity Board is taking all possible steps to repair the 30 MW set at Paras and has also started a new 62.5 MW set there. The work on the new station at Bhusaval is also progressing. Intensive efforts are being made to erect the Kalwa-Nasik transmission line so that relief can be obtained through the Tata-Koyna-Railway

grid when necessary. The Tarapore atomic electricity station is expected to supply 190 MW to the State during the next year.

16. Government has decided to apply the Beedi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act 1966, from 1st April 1968. This Act will help a large number of workers in the Beedi industry to improve their service conditions and give them a fair deal.

17. The tempo of progress in education was maintained during the year and emphasis was laid on minimising the regional imbalance in respect of the availability of educational facilities. Programmes for the qualitative improvement of education were also given due attention. Two more Government Public Schools were established at Nasik and Chikhaldra to enable talented students from rural areas of Bombay and Nagpur Divisions to get good quality secondary education. It has also been decided to set up a Bureau of Government Examinations to conduct on a sound and scientific basis the different examinations now conducted by the various offices under the control of the Education Department and also to introduce new techniques of evaluation and measures for examination reform.

18. As an important step for bringing about uniformity in the pattern of primary education in the different regions of the State, a new uniform syllabus is proposed to be introduced in phases in all the primary schools in the State, in Std. I to begin with, from the next year. The State Bureau of Text Book Production and Curriculum Research which was established during last year will bring out before the commencement of the next academic year, quality text-books for Std. I in accordance with the new syllabus. A new school feeding programme is being initially introduced in selected primary schools in the three districts of Poona, Thana and Nagpur in collaboration with the CARE.

19. The revised scales of pay as recommended by the University Grants Commission and the Government of India for lecturers, professors etc. in Arts, Science and Commerce Colleges and Colleges of Education, have been introduced. The new private Arts and Commerce Colleges opened since June 1963 which were not being paid any grants, have now been held eligible for grants according to normal rules. The Maharashtra Libraries Act 1966, has been passed by you. It is now proposed to establish a separate Directorate of

Libraries for effective implementation of the Act. To raise the standard of Art Education, Government has recently appointed a Review Committee for reviewing and revising the syllabii of the courses for the Government Higher Art Examinations. In the field of technical education, efforts have been continued to consolidate and strengthen the existing institutions by provision of additional equipment and physical facilities.

20. In order to associate the representatives of the people and the medical profession more effectively with the hospital administration in the State, Government has constituted Boards of Visitors for teaching hospitals with wide powers of supervision. Similar Boards are proposed to be constituted for district hospitals. With the completion of its building at Nagpur, the second Dental College in the State would start functioning from the next academic year. The Ayurvedic College at Nanded has been upgraded for conducting a Degree course. Similarly, the Ayurvedic Hospital at Nagpur is also being expanded so that necessary facilities for the advance courses at the Nagpur Ayurvedic College are made available.

21. Under the Employees' State Insurance Scheme, hospitalisation facilities are not given at present to the family members of the insured workers. These facilities are proposed to be extended, in a phased programme, to the family members of the workers coming under the Medical Officers, Poona and Nagpur. Specialist facilities would also be made available to such members in Greater Bombay during the next year.

22. It is heartening to note that the programme of Family Planning is gaining momentum day by day and Government hopes that the popular response will ensure the achievement of the goal of bringing down the birth-rate from 40 per thousand to 25 per thousand by 1976.

23. The Maharashtra Ownership Flats Act 1963, has been extended to Poona and Thana Municipal areas and Poona and Kirkee Cantonment areas. The Act has been found useful in regulating the promotion and construction etc. of flats on ownership basis, and in some measure in checking the malpractices connected with it.

24. Good progress has been made as a result of the coming into force of the Maharashtra Regional and Town Planning Act 1966,

Government has constituted Bombay, Poona and Nagpur Metropolitan Regional Planning Boards for the preparation of regional plans for these regions.

25. A revised pattern of assistance has been approved by Government for urban water supply and drainage schemes with a view to helping the local bodies in executing the schemes more expeditiously.

Government has already liberalised its policy regarding financial assistance to the Zilla Parishads for their rural drinking water supply programmes. As a result, construction of 19,000 wells has been taken up by the Parishads. Out of these 8,909 wells have been completed and work on 9,573 is in progress. So far as piped water supply schemes are concerned, 212 schemes covering 598 villages have been undertaken. Out of these 39 schemes covering 198 villages have been completed and 118 schemes covering 317 villages are in progress.

26. You have already expressed in your resolutions during the last Session the popular feelings on the recommendations of the Mahajan Commission on the border dispute between this State and Mysore. The resolutions have been conveyed to the Government of India and to the Parliament. My Government is fully confident that both the Parliament and the Government of India will do justice to the people in the disputed areas.

27. There is another Inter-State problem about which the people of this State have been deeply concerned. It relates to a just and equitable allocation of waters of the Krishna and Godavari rivers. Government has repeatedly urged the Government of India for an early settlement of this issue on some rational principles which would be fair to all the States concerned. Such a settlement alone would remove the present state of uncertainty and facilitate an orderly development of irrigation programmes which have necessarily to be planned in advance on a long term basis. In the absence of a firm and fair allocation of these waters, the interests of this State are being seriously jeopardised. This aspect has been brought to the notice of the Government of India and every effort has been made by my Government to find an acceptable solution, but it has been distressed to notice that there is no adequate appreciation of these efforts. As a result, the Inter-State

discussions held so far in this connection have not yielded any significant results. On the other hand, certain developments which are being permitted in some parts of the country are positively prejudicial to the legitimate claims of this State. My Government, therefore, views the situation with growing anxiety and would be obliged to move for the appointment of a Tribunal at an early date to get the issue decided once for all.

28. The present Session has been summoned mainly to pass the budget estimates for the next year. The following legislation will be introduced during the Session :—

- (1) Mahatma Phule Vastusangrahalaya, Poona, Bill.
- (2) A Bill to amend the Maharashtra Co-operative Societies Act, 1960.
- (3) A Bill to amend the Bombay City Civil Court Act.
- (4) A Bill to amend the Maharashtra Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samitis Act, 1961.
- (5) A Bill to amend the Maharashtra Regional and Town Planning Act.
- (6) A Bill to amend the Maharashtra Agricultural Lands (Ceiling on Holdings) Act, 1961.
- (7) A Bill to amend the Maharashtra Land Revenue Code.
- (8) A Bill to amend the Indian Forests Act, 1927 in its application to the State of Maharashtra.

29. Honourable Members, I now leave you to the heavy and busy Session awaiting you, in full confidence that you will continue to conduct the business with the foresight, energy and decorum, which have always been the cherished traditions of our two legislative Houses.

