



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,

1. It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this first Session of the New State Legislature. The exemplary manner in which the people of this State have conducted themselves in exercising their franchise has once again demonstrated our staunch adherence to democratic ideals and practices.

2. Momentous events have taken place recently. In December 1971, we were faced with a challenge to our sovereignty and national integrity. We are all proud of the national response to this challenge and the gallant action of our armed forces. I would like to salute the memory of those who laid down their lives for the defence of the country. Thanks to the heroism, spirit of sacrifice and valour of our armed forces, the dedicated work of our public servants, the unity of our people and the mature and dynamic leadership of our Prime Minister, our nation has been able to triumph over the forces of bigotry and colonialism. Maharashtra contributed with whole-hearted co-operation and unstinted selflessness its mite towards the national endeavour during the crisis. Our magnificent victory during the last war has proved that democracy, secularism and socialism can alone triumph over the narrow forces of religious and racial intolerance. It has also taught us the need for self-reliance.

3. There has been a spontaneous response from the public to the National Defence Fund, and for donations of blood, in particular by industrial workers, agriculturists, students and teachers. The influx of nearly ten million refugees from Bangla Desh, caused by the ruthless atrocities inflicted on their lives, properties and honour, imposed a tremendous burden on the resources of our country. In order to bring relief the Government and people of the State contributed generously in money and in kind. In addition,

to reduce the financial burden on the Government of India, this State imposed certain levies by Ordinances which the people bore willingly and in a truly national spirit. These levies will soon be presented to the Legislature for enactment as law.

Small
Savings.

4. In Maharashtra the Small Savings Scheme was also mobilised on a war-footing. People responded to the call enthusiastically and helped the State to invest Rs. 25 crores in Small Savings over and above this year's target of Rs. 31.63 crores. Apart from the cause it will sponsor, it is in essence a people's scheme benefiting above all the common man and this feature explains the ready manner in which it caught the people's imagination.

5. My Government has taken several relief measures for the welfare of defence services personnel disabled or wounded, and families of those killed in action. Cash awards for gallantry, grant of land for agriculture and for residential accommodation, employment facilities, interest-free loans for starting small-scale industries and educational concessions, are some of the important measures. Special mention needs to be made in this behalf of the work done by the Citizens' Defence Committee and the magnificent co-operation rendered by the Mass Media of Communications throughout the critical period.

6. Despite the fact that in the year 1971-72 the State suffered heavily on account of large-scale failure of crops involving the Government in heavy expenditure of crores of rupees, I am glad that our performance under the State Plan Programme has been satisfactory.

7. Now that my Government has been returned with renewed confidence from the people of the State, it is determined to carry out as expeditiously as possible the various assurances given to the people.

8. In particular, it is anxious to bring about a rapid economic advancement of the under-privileged and weaker sections of our society, namely, the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Nomadic Tribes, marginal farmers, small holders, agricultural labourers, hutment dwellers in urban areas, casual labour in industrial units and the unemployed and under-employed rural population. For this purpose, Government has formulated an ambitious 15-point

code, which is the sheet-anchor of our programme of action for the coming years. The broad features of this programme are :

- (i) Providing employment guarantee in manual work for the rural population.
- (ii) Monopoly purchase of cotton and re-organisation of the Cotton Textile Industry and strengthening of the handloom industry.
- (iii) Guaranteed minimum wages for agricultural labourers for whom a minimum wage is not prescribed so far.
- (iv) Opening of Ashram Shalas and adopting an area development approach for the welfare of Adivasis.
- (v) Encouraging self-employment among the educated unemployed through liberal financial assistance.
- (vi) Transfer of entire land revenue to the village panchayats with a view to enabling them to undertake productive works at village level.
- (vii) Protection to industrial workers and casual labourers and encouraging workers' participation in management, extension of benefits of provident fund and bonus to such industrial workers as are not covered by these benefits so far.
- (viii) Earmarking of at least 15 per cent of the financial resources of each Zilla Parishad for welfare schemes in the interest of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Nomadic Tribes, etc.
- (ix) Reservation of 80 per cent vacancies in Government, *quasi*-Government and Co-operative Services for families where there is not a single earning member or whose monthly assured income is less than Rs. 200 or whose owned land is less than one family holding under the Tenancy Act.
- (x) Providing drinking water facilities in all the villages of the State before the end of the Fifth Five-Year Plan.
- (xi) Provision of basic amenities to persons living in sub-standard conditions in the slum areas.

Land Reforms.

9. Additional two most pressing problems which have been engaging the attention of my Government are land reforms and ceiling on urban property. In the field of land reforms a significant development was the appointment by the Government of India of the Central Land Reforms Committee regarding ceiling on agricultural land. The recommendations of the Committee which were announced in the Rajya Sabha on the 4th August 1971 were to the effect that ceiling on agricultural land should be fixed with reference to a family consisting of husband, wife and minor children, that the ceiling for irrigated land should range between 10 and 18 acres and that ceiling for unirrigated land should be 54 acres with higher limits for inferior lands and for areas having insufficient or scanty rainfall. My Government has accepted these recommendations *in toto* and a Bill to give effect to them will be introduced in the next Session.

10. In response to the demand for agricultural land for cultivation from the landless, the Government appointed in April 1970 a Committee in each district under the Chairmanship of the President, Zilla Parishad, to make more forest and waste lands available for cultivation. As a result of the work of these committees, an area of about 67,000 hectares of forests and waste lands has been made available for distribution to the landless after reserving sufficient land for grant to persons affected by irrigation projects.

Ceiling on Urban Property.

11. As regards ceiling on urban property, I would like to make it clear that my Government is equally committed to ceiling on urban property with a view to reducing economic inequalities and securing social justice and has already authorised the Government of India to undertake forthwith uniform legislation for the whole country. This is necessary for an effective implementation of the law.

Scarcity.

12. The agricultural season in 1971-72 was disappointing. Because of the failure of the monsoons, the Kharif crop has practically failed. This resulted in scarcity for the second year in succession and the position in the five districts of Aurangabad Division, Sholapur and Ahmednagar Districts as well as in some parts of Vidarbha and Western Maharashtra caused considerable anxiety. Employment had, therefore, to be provided to agriculturists and to agricultural labourers affected by scarcity. At the peak of the scarcity, nearly 15 lakhs of persons were being provided with work. Though the Rabi season started normally, the absence of rains

during the later part of the season and the continuous spell of cold weather have somewhat affected the prospects of the Rabi Crop. Scarcity works may, therefore, have to be continued till June 1972 in the Kharif areas and till October 1972 in the Rabi areas. My Government has tackled the problem of scarcity not only expeditiously but with courage and imagination. The expenditure incurred up to the end of February 1972 towards meeting the unprecedented situation caused by scarcity would be in the region of nearly Rs. 40 crores.

Panchayati Raj. 13. The Committee appointed by Government to evaluate the working of the Panchayati Raj in this State has submitted its report. Government is examining the various suggestions and recommendations made therein and decisions of Government thereon will be placed before the House in due course.

Prices. 14. The general level of prices of essential commodities depends upon factors of all-India nature. The State Government has been striving to hold the price line to the extent possible. Particular mention may be made of the efforts made to check the rise of prices during the recent war. On the outbreak of hostilities, prices of certain essential commodities such as battery cells, kerosene, sugar, etc., tended to rise. Vigorous measures were adopted by Government to curb anti-social elements and to check rise in prices in various commodities.

Dairy Development. 15. Under the World Food Programme Scheme No. 348, a fund to the extent of about Rs. 1 crore has been generated by sale of Skim Milk Powder, out of which nearly Rs. 50 lakhs have been loaned out to Milk Producers' Co-operative Societies for purchase of milch animals and transport vehicles, and the balance of Rs. 50 lakhs has been earmarked for construction of all-weather roads in inaccessible rural areas so as to facilitate transport of milk throughout the year. The Indian Dairy Corporation set up by the Government of India would generate a fund from the sale of Skim Milk Powder and butter oil received from the World Food Organisation. From this fund, the Corporation has earmarked an amount of Rs. 17.25 crores for dairy development in Maharashtra. Main features of this programme are expansion of Aarey and Worli Dairies, establishment of a third dairy at Kurla, establishment of chilling centres and technical inputs for increased milk production.

Until now heavy import of skim milk powder constituted a great drain on our foreign exchange. With a view to achieving self-reliance in this field, the Miraj Dairy has put into commission production of milk powder.

16. Government has decided, as a measure of policy that in future, all milk schemes would be started in the co-operative sector. With a view to implementing this programme, ten integrated milk schemes with the aid of financial assistance being made available under "Operation Flood Programme" sponsored by the World Food Organisation of the United Nations have been prepared in Co-operative Sector. The total capital outlay of these schemes is of the order of Rs. 19.06 crores and it is expected that about 10 lakhs of litres of milk per day would be handled when completed.

17. Government has evolved a guarantee scheme for making available adequate finance for milch cattle through District Central Co-operative Banks, Thana, Kolaba and Ratnagiri for development of milk industry as a part of an all-round co-ordinated activity and development of the Konkan Region.

Fisheries. 18. Government has recently undertaken a survey of fishing grounds in the deep sea beyond 30 fathoms off Ratnagiri coast. Government envisages joint sector venture in the matter of exploration of deep sea for increasing fish production. Efforts in this direction through Government sponsored corporations are in progress. Co-operative Fisheries Projects with the help of Agricultural Refinance Corporation have also been approved for Malwan in Ratnagiri District and for Kolaba District. These are expected to be implemented during 1972-73. Government has decided to encourage Co-operative Integrated Fisheries Projects.

**Rural and
Urban Water
Supply
Schemes.**

19. The Life Insurance Corporation of India has agreed, in principle, to provide upto Rs. 10 crores for rural piped water supply schemes during the Fourth Plan period. About 913 rural piped water supply schemes in the State and Local Sectors involving a capital outlay of Rs. 7.07 crores were being implemented in 1971-72. Piped water supply schemes in 636 villages were completed upto March 1971. Work was in progress on piped water supply schemes covering 1,620 villages during 1971-72. The work on Bhatsai Water Supply Project for the City of Bombay is in full swing and necessary provision is proposed to be made.

Power
Generation.

20. The first set of 30 MW of Parli Thermal Power Station was synchronised on the 15th November 1971. The set is expected to be put into commercial operation shortly. Erection work on the second set is in progress. The work of the Koradi Thermal Power Station with an initial capacity of 480 MW and ultimate capacity of 1080 MW is in progress.

Rural
Electrifica-
tion.

21. The rising demand for electricity for villages, and irrigation pumps is being met from loan assistance from the Agricultural Finance Corporation, Agricultural Refinance Corporation and Rural Electrification Corporation, etc., outside the State Plan in addition to funds allocated in the Annual Plan. The Agricultural Finance Corporation has so far sanctioned a loan of Rs. 20.19 crores for schemes for energising 84,497 agricultural pumps from 25 districts. The Maharashtra State Electricity Board has energised 80,445 pumps upto the 31st December 1971 under these schemes. The Corporation has also approved, in principle, the Board's further energising of 54,880 pumps from 20 districts and has initially sanctioned Rs. 7 crores for this Scheme. The work is in progress.

Slum
Clearance.

22. A Scheme for clearance of slums on both sides of the Western Express Highway in Bombay (from Mahim Causeway to Santacruz Airport) and for construction of tenements for various income groups, including slum dwellers drawn up by the Maharashtra Housing Board has been approved by the Housing and Urban Development Corporation Ltd., India, for assistance from its Revolving Fund.

23. Government has decided to implement a programme for providing basic amenities such as water, electricity, public latrines and drainage and roads, wherever possible, to hutment dwellers in Greater Bombay area, and to initiate a similar effort for hutment dwellers in the area of the Municipal Corporations of Poona, Nagpur and Sholapur and Municipal Council of Aurangabad.

24. Schemes to help the educated unemployed for settling themselves in self-employment have been evolved. Five new centrally sponsored schemes for assisting the educated unemployed have been launched during the current year and substantial allocations are expected from the Centre for these schemes during

the coming year. Out of these centrally sponsored schemes, the scheme for Capital Participation in industrial units to be started by the educated unemployed as well as the scheme of Technicians' Co-operatives would be implemented through the agency of Regional Development Corporations. Two of the Central Schemes, viz., Commercial Estates and the Industrial Estates would be implemented through the agency of the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation and the fifth scheme of Hire-Purchase of indigenous machinery by the educated unemployed would be implemented through the agency of the Maharashtra Small Scale Industries Development Corporation.

Education. 25. You will recall that in February 1970, a Policy Statement on Educational Reconstruction in Maharashtra was issued by Government and in accordance with the guidelines and objectives set out in that Statement, programmes aimed at equalisation of educational opportunities and development of socially and economically under-developed classes and areas are being vigorously pursued. The pattern of primary education throughout the State has already been unified and revitalised by introducing in a progressive manner from the year 1968 onwards a revised syllabus for Standards I to VII in all primary schools in the State. We are now on the threshold of unification and transformation of the pattern of secondary education leading upto the S. S. C. examination. The first step in this direction by introducing a new syllabus for Standard VIII will be taken from the next academic year.

26. Government has constituted a High Level Co-ordination Committee for Scientific and Technological Research and its utilisation, under the Chairmanship of the Chief Minister, to promote co-operation among the Universities, Central Government Laboratories, and the Science and Engineering based Departments of the State Government, to bring about co-ordination among Technological and Science Institutions in the State and to act generally as a "Think Tank" of the State Government.

Family Planning. 27. The achievements of this State in family planning continue to be impressive. In keeping with its past traditions, the Government is likely to break all records throughout the country by achieving more than 4 lakh sterilisations in 1971-72.

Labour.

28. Under the Maharashtra Mathadi, Hamal and other Manual Workers (Regulation of Employment and Welfare) Act, 1969, so far, schemes have been framed for employment and welfare of unprotected workers engaged in loading and unloading in (i) Iron and Steel Markets, Shops and Factories ; (ii) Grocery Markets and Shops ; (iii) Cloth Markets and Shops ; (iv) Public Goods Transport, in certain specified areas in Greater Bombay. Government has decided to extend these schemes to employment in Onion and Potato Wholesale Markets in Greater Bombay and employment in Factories and Mills manufacturing grocery articles in Greater Bombay from the 1st May 1972. It has also been decided to extend the scheme to Fishing Industry and Cotton Markets in Bombay. Steps are also being taken in this State to enforce from the 15th August 1972 the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act (which is a Central Act) and create necessary machinery for this purpose.

29. Government has decided to fix minimum rates of wages for agricultural labour in all areas in the State. A Committee has been appointed to study the general conditions of employment in agriculture and to recommend rates of minimum wages.

Improving
the condi-
tions of
Handloom
Weavers.

30. My Government has accepted all the recommendations of the Committee appointed for ameliorating the conditions of Handloom Weavers for implementation in stages. A separate Directorate called " Directorate of Handlooms, Powerlooms and Co-operative Textiles ", with Headquarters at Nagpur and three Regional Offices at Nagpur, Bombay and Sholapur has been created with effect from the 2nd October 1971. A separate Corporation called " Maharashtra State Handlooms Corporation " has also been created with effect from the 1st November 1971. Action is being taken by this Corporation for arranging loans to individual weavers. A separate Corporation called " Maharashtra State Powerlooms Corporation " has also been registered for looking after the interests of Powerloom Industry.

Co-operative
Sugar
Factories.

31. There are in all 69 Co-operative Sugar Factories including 20 medium size factories. Looking to the complex nature of the industry and its technical problems, the State Government has set up from the 1st November 1971 a separate Directorate for orderly development of the industry, both in the private and co-operative sectors.

Food and
Drug Admin-
istration.

32. The Maharashtra State is the first State in India which has brought both Food and Drugs under the same administration. The supervisory control over the enforcement of the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954, has also been entrusted to this Administration. Due to the good work done by the Food and Drug Administration in the field of control of quality, purity and strength of drugs manufactured and sold in the State, the percentage of sub-standard drugs has considerably decreased. This Administration has also taken effective measures to control drug prices and keep up supply of essential drugs during the current Emergency.

Administra-
tive Reforms.

33. The Maharashtra Lokayukta and Upa-Lokayuktas Act, 1971, passed by the State Legislature has recently received the President's assent. The question of appointing the Lokayukta is under consideration of my Government.

Ed

New Depart-
ment.

34. A separate Administrative Department at the Secretariat level, namely, Social Welfare, Cultural Affairs, Sports and Tourism Department, has been created with effect from the 1st December 1971, with a view to promoting various activities in the field of Sports and Games, Youth Welfare, Physical Education, N.C.C., Scouting and Tourism. A Special Committee has also been set up to prepare a White Paper with a view to evolving a long term policy on Youth Welfare.

Border
Dispute.

35. Now that the general elections are over, and a popular Government has been formed in Mysore, my Government hopes that the Government of India who have already taken in hand the Maharashtra-Mysore Border question will solve it soon.

Tribal
Welfare
Corporation.

36. A Tribal Development Corporation has been set up for an all-round development of the tribal people in general and their economic development in particular. During the next five years, this Corporation will have an authorised share capital of Rs. 3 crores and it will extend its activities to 200 primary centres in the tribal areas covering 2,000 villages.

Legislative
Programme.

37. The present Session has been summoned mainly to pass a Vote on Account for authorising the Government to incur expenditure for the next four months and will, therefore, be a short one.

38. The legislative programme for the current Session will be confined to conversion of the following Ordinances into Acts except the Maharashtra Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samitis (Amendment) Bill, 1972 :

- (1) The Maharashtra Temporary Increase in Entertainments Duty and Education Cess Ordinance, 1971 (Mah. Ord. VI of 1971).
- (2) The Maharashtra Temporary Increase in Taxes on Motor Vehicles and Passengers Ordinance, 1971 (Mah. Ord. VIII of 1971).
- (3) The Maharashtra Agricultural University (Krishi Vidya-peeth) (Amendment) Ordinance, 1971 (Mah. Ord. IX of 1971).
- (4) The Maharashtra Co-operative Societies (Postponement of Elections due to the Emergency) Ordinance, 1971 (Mah. Ord. X of 1971).
- (5) The Maharashtra Medical Practitioners' (Amendment) Ordinance, 1972 (Mah. Ord. I of 1972).
- (6) The Motor Vehicles (Maharashtra Amendment) Ordinance, 1972 (Mah. Ord. II of 1972).
- (7) The Maharashtra Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samitis (Amendment) Bill, 1972.

Conclusion.

39. Honourable Members, I have indicated to you the policies and programmes which my Government has adopted and proposes to pursue for achieving its two-fold objective of reducing economic inequalities and achieving social justice. I am now leaving you to your deliberations in the hope that your endeavours would enhance the rich traditions of this State.

