



सत्यमेव जयते

ADDRESS

delivered by

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GOVERNOR OF MAHARASHTRA

JOINT SESSION OF THE MAHARASHTRA LEGISLATURE AT MUMBAI

12th March 2001

MR. CHAIRMAN, MR. SPEAKER AND HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

I have great pleasure in welcoming you to the first Session of the State Legislature in 2001. At the outset, I pay my homage to the unfortunate men, women and children, who lost their lives in the disastrous earthquake that struck Gujarat on 26 January this year. I also recall with sadness the tragedy caused by the land slide at Ghatkopar in July 2000 where 71 people lost their lives. I also pay my respectful homage to those members of the State Legislature, who passed away during the year 2000-2001.

2. It is more than one year since the new Government assumed office in Maharashtra. I am happy that the Government has been working sincerely and with commitment to fulfil the assurances given in its Common Minimum Programme. A number of policy decisions for improving the life of the common man have been taken in respect of Panchayati Raj Institutions, Industry, Textile Mills land, Information Technology, Slum Redevelopment, Education and generation of Employment and self-employment. My Government would now be vigorously pursuing the implementation of these policies for the benefit of public at large.

3. A massive earthquake on 26 January 2001 devastated many parts of the State of Gujarat. My Government immediately mobilised special relief operations. I am proud to state that Maharashtra was the first State to immediately rush to the help of the earthquake affected people of Gujarat. People of Maharashtra, Non-Governmental Organisations and

Government and Semi-Government departments responded with alacrity to undertake massive relief efforts. Essential commodities such as food grains, sugar, milk products, mineral water and items like blankets, utensils, tin sheets and tents were immediately dispatched to Bhachau, Bhuj and Ahmedabad. The Government also sent the necessary equipment for rapid rescue and relief operations and for clearance of debris. My Government has concentrated its relief efforts in the worst-affected Bhachau taluka of Bhuj District. My Government has also accepted the responsibility for complete rehabilitation of two villages — **Adhoi and Vondh.**

Three medical teams from Maharashtra were rushed to the disaster-affected areas with life saving drugs and equipment. They conducted around 6000 major and minor operations saving lives of the injured. 702 critically injured persons were brought to the Hospitals in Maharashtra for specialised treatment. In addition, the personnel from Civil Defence, Fire Brigade, Home Guards and the Technical wing of the Public Works Department contributed significantly in the relief operations.

Manpower and material worth Rs. 1.5 crore was supplied by Maharashtra State Electricity Board. The Maharashtra Police ensured communication between State Headquarters at Mumbai and the relief camp at Bhachau. People in the State have contributed Rs. 19.50 crore towards the Chief Minister's Relief Fund for Gujarat so far. All the State Government employees shall be contributing a day's salary for relief and rehabilitation work taken up by the Government of Maharashtra.

4. The Annual Plan for 2001-2002 has been finalised with an outlay of Rs. 11,720.56 crore, subject to the approval of the Planning Commission.

I have accepted the recommendations in the Report of the reconstituted Indicators and Backlog Committee. My Government has taken a decision to liquidate the remaining backlog as on 31st March 2001 within a period of five years, for which the outlay for removal of backlog has been significantly increased for the year 2001-2002 from Rs. 1,100 crore to Rs. 1,720 crore, which is 14.68% of the Annual Plan outlay. Keeping in view the remaining backlog, provision of 50.06% for Vidarbha, 28.52% for Marathwada and 21.42% for rest of Maharashtra has been made out of this total outlay.

My Government completed one year in office in October 2000. On this occasion, the Government adopted a **“Vision Paper Maharashtra 2005”**, indicating a programme to develop various physical and service infrastructure facilities and to enhance the development of human resources.

5. Maharashtra continues to be the premier Industrial State in the country and also the favoured destination amongst both foreign and domestic investors. During last year, the number of Industrial Entrepreneurs Memoranda have increased from 7,605 to 8,338 with an additional investment of Rs. 22,031 crore, taking the total investment to Rupees One lakh Ninty-seven thousand Eight hundred Eighty-three crore from August 1991 till December 2000. The number of Foreign Direct Investment approvals, from August 1991 upto November 2000 is 1,973 with an investment of Rs. 48,153 crore which is the highest amongst all the States in the country.

My Government has recently approved an Industrial Policy 2001, keeping in view the objectives of sustained growth, employment and expansion in livelihood opportunities. As per this policy, Special Economic Zones at Aurangabad and Nagpur, in addition to the one at Dronagiri in Navi Mumbai

which is presently being developed by CIDCO will be set up. Beside this, setting up complexes for agro-industry including a Grape-Wine Park, an Orange City Park, Floriculture Complexes and Biotechnology Parks; incentives like exemption from electricity duty, waiver of stamp duty and registration fee; special capital incentives for Small Scale Industrial units and interest subsidy for garments, textiles and hosiery units in the Small Scale Industries sector are also some of the Highlights of the New Industrial Policy. My Government has also initiated review of the Industrial Disputes Act and the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act and procedures to enable Industry and Labour to meet the new challenges, while simultaneously safeguarding the legitimate interests of Labour.

6. To promote non-conventional energy sources, the Government has approved private entrepreneur projects to generate 443 MW through wind power of which projects with 154 MW capacity have already been commissioned. My Government has also approved bagasse based cogeneration projects of around 170 MW capacity which are under commissioning.

The last unit of Stage IV of the Koyna Project was commissioned this year creating an additional capacity of 250 MW.

In order to reduce the impact of the tariff revision by the Maharashtra Electricity Regulatory Commission, the Government has decided to give subsidy worth Rs. 800 crore to farmers and powerloom weavers.

7. The Government has exempted the Software and Information Technology Industry from certain provisions of the Bombay Shops and Establishment Act so as to promote employment of women in this Industry. My Government has

simplified the procedure under various labour laws which includes the reduction in the number of forms that are required to be maintained by the Industrial units.

My Government has decided to increase the minimum wages of all Agricultural Labourers by ten rupees.

8. In order to promote efficient use of water, the subsidy for Drip Irrigation has been enhanced from 50% to 75% for farmers from the General Category and 90% for farmers belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. The limit for subsidy has also been increased from Rs. 20,500 to Rs. 32,000 per hectare.

In order to facilitate agricultural education in rural areas, the Government has decided to approve Agriculture schools and Degree colleges in Agriculture and allied subjects on no-grant basis from the year 2000-2001.

To obviate financial constraints faced by the Agricultural Universities, the Government has revised the grant-in-aid formula from the year 2000-2001.

The Government proposes to establish a fertiliser project at Khamgaon in Buldhana District through the Maharashtra Agro Industries Development Corporation, a State Government undertaking.

9. Due to the very erratic Monsoon last year in Maharashtra, 20,519 villages in 23 Districts have been declared with paisewari of 50 paise or below. My Government has taken necessary measures like reactivating relief works under the Employment Guarantee Scheme, emergency measures for supply of drinking water to the affected villages, supply of seeds and fertilisers for resowing wherever required and supply of fodder for cattle.

10. Employment Guarantee Scheme continues to be vigorously implemented in the State, generating 12.92 crore Mandays employment during the year.

During the current year certain important decisions have been taken. For road works under the EGS, the distinction between Plan and Non-Plan works has been removed. It has also been decided to take up farm roads connecting to the main road, internal village roads and roads connecting hamlets to the main village. In the scarcity affected areas in the State, the work of construction of additional 10,000 wells under the Jawahar Rojgar Yojana and Drinking Water Wells under the EGS in each affected district is also being taken up. Under the Employment Guarantee Scheme, the wages of the workers are being increased by ten Rupees from Gudipadva day.

11. My Government has accepted the principle of uniformity in respect of all the Irrigation Development Corporations and has, accordingly, decided to carry out necessary amendments in the relevant laws. Every effort is being made by the Irrigation Development Corporations to accelerate the completion of Irrigation projects. It has therefore been decided to hand over all projects in Vidarbha and new projects in Konkan regions to the respective Corporations.

The Irrigation Development Corporations are entitled to raise funds through Bonds, in addition to the outlays in the Budget. Some portion of the outlay of these Corporations shall be reserved for the Development of Tribal areas falling within the areas of the respective Corporation. Further, lift irrigation schemes in the Tribal areas will be largely financed by these Corporations and the additional cost, if any, will be provided from the Tribal Sub Plan.

The irrigation potential created in the State till the end of June 2000 was about 36.60 lakh hectares. An additional 2.46 lakh hectares will be achieved by June 2001.

12. In order to speed up the Water Conservation activities, the Maharashtra Water Conservation Corporation has been set up with effect from 22nd August 2000. Water conservation works have been taken up in 10,710 villages in the State.

Under the Vidarbha Development Programme, a massive programme for repairs of ex-malgajari tanks in Vidarbha area is being taken up from this year.

13. The Animal and Fisheries Sciences University has started functioning at Nagpur from 3rd December 2000.

To encourage self employment and to intensify the cross breeding programme, 450 educated unemployed veterinary personnel are being trained and assistance for purchase of equipment is being provided to set up an equal number of veterinary centres in Backward areas.

Due to increase in the cost of production of milk and to ensure remunerative milk prices to small farmers, the Government has increased the procurement price of milk by 80 paise per litre. To encourage consumption of milk in the areas of production, the sale price of milk has been reduced by 50 paise outside the jurisdiction of the Greater Mumbai Milk Scheme.

In order to provide adequate infrastructure facilities at fish landing centres, the Government has decided to take up construction of 19 fishing jetties and 7 ports at a cost of Rs. 60 crore. To increase the fish catch and to ensure better efficiency and safety of fishermen, programmes of assistance for mechanized boats and modern navigational equipment have been substantially strengthened.

A joint venture agreement has recently been signed for construction of a modern Under Water World Oceanarium, to be entirely financed through foreign investment of Rs. 134 crore, at the Taraporwala Aquarium in Mumbai.

14. My Government has declared a new Drinking Water Policy reflecting the genuine need of the people. In view of the drinking water scarcity in some parts of the State, the Government has taken adequate relief measures.

The Government has also launched the **Sant Gadge Baba Gram Swachhata Abhiyan** and the **Rashtra Sant Tukadoji Maharaj Clean Village Competition** from the current year to promote "Cleanliness through peoples' participation". This has received spontaneous response from the public.

15. I had, with great pleasure, inaugurated the computerisation of the office of the Inspector General of Stamps, Pune, this year. This has shown encouraging results as the people are able to get their registered documents promptly. The Government proposes to extend this facility to cover most of the talukas in the State in the coming year.

The Government has decided to allot land for residential, commercial or industrial purposes to the blind and handicapped persons, without public auction.

For the benefit of ex-servicemen and serving jawans, the income limit for grant of land has been increased from Rs. 12,000 to Rs. 35,000 per year.

A Bill to make the procedure of transfer to watan lands, new tenure lands and Class II lands more simple will be presented by the Government in this Session. In order to give Justice to the unprotected tenants (**Bedakhul Kul**) in Sindhudurg and Ratnagiri Districts, the Government has

amended the Bombay Tenancy Act. This will benefit many people in the Konkan region.

To redress the grievances of the people, the Government has revised the decision taken in March 1999 regarding the increase in Non-Agricultural Assessment and has decided to restrict the increase in Non-Agricultural Assessment for old cases upto 3 times the rate of 1991 in Municipal Corporation areas and 2 times the rate of 1991 in the Municipal Council areas. For newly assessed properties, the rate is restricted to 6 times the rate of 1991 in Municipal Corporation areas and 4 times the rate of 1991 in the Municipal Council areas. However, there would be no increase in the Non-Agricultural Assessment for the rural areas. This will give substantial relief to the people.

16. The Government has taken a decision to give Rs. 5 lakhs to the widows or dependents of the members of the armed forces and paramilitary forces from Maharashtra, who laid down their lives in May 1999 along the line of control in Jammu and Kashmir for the defence of the country. The Government has decided to extend this scheme for the members of the armed forces and paramilitary forces from Maharashtra deployed along the entire border line of the country. Similarly, Assistance for those jawans who suffered disabilities from 20% to 49% has been increased from Rs. 25,000 to Rs. 1 lakh and for those suffering disabilities of more than 50% from Rs. 50,000 to Rs. 3 lakhs.

Under the **Maharashtra Gaurav Puraskar Scheme 1990**, six categories of gallantry awards which include cash awards and pension of Rs. 750 per month to the widows or dependents of the Jawans killed in action are being given. The Government has now included eight more categories of

gallantry awards for providing cash assistance and has also decided to increase the amount of pension to Rs. 1,000 per month from 1st July 2000.

17. To provide financial assistance to co-operative societies, my Government has established the Maharashtra Co-operative Development Corporation which started functioning from 1st January 2001. The Corporation has raised Rs. 100 crore through private placement of Bonds. This fund will be utilised for giving financial assistance to co-operative societies and for rehabilitation of sick co-operative societies. I am confident that this Corporation will open new horizons for the co-operative movement.

In the Managing Committee of the Co-operative Societies, there is at present only one reserved seat for the Scheduled Castes / Scheduled Tribes. Enlarging this provision, one seat each is going to be reserved also for the Denotified Tribes / Notified Tribes and Other Backward Classes. With this decision, the exploited and neglected class of society will get an opportunity to take part in the decision making process of the Co-operative Sector.

18. The Monopoly Cotton Procurement Scheme has been extended till 30th June 2001 with the permission of the Government of India. The Government has fixed the rate of Rs. 2,300 per quintal for Fair Average Quality of H-4 variety of cotton. In order to provide relief to the cotton growers, the Government has decided to pay the Guarantee Price and the first installment of Advance Additional Price simultaneously from 1st January 2001.

There was record procurement of 175.63 lakh quintals of cotton during the last cotton season, at an estimated cost of Rs. 3,623 crore.

The Government has decided to set up 5 Textile Zones in the State at Butibori-Nagpur, Yavatmal or Amravati, Khandesh region, Kolhapur and Aurangabad.

During 2000-2001, the Government has implemented the Purchase Support Scheme under which a total of Nineteen lakh Ninety-eight thousand Eight hundred and one quintals of Jowar, Bajra, Maize and Paddy were purchased at a cost of Rs. 101.65 crore approximately.

19. The Government has taken up an ambitious programme to connect villages with a population of more than 500 in hilly and tribal areas and more than 1000 in other areas through all weather roads. 96% of such villages were connected by 31st March 2000. A programme of improvement and black topping of rural roads with Rs. 806 crore assistance from NABARD has been taken up during the year. The work involves 5034 kilometers of bituminous surfacing and 319 bridges. An amount of Rs. 173 crore has also been sanctioned as loan from HUDCO for improvement of approximately 1000 Kilometers of roads and 400 bridges.

20. Since its creation in 1960, Maharashtra has been constantly and continuously strengthening the growth and development of Local Self Government bodies and implementing the principle of power to the people. The State enacted legislation to set up the 3 tier system of Panchayat Raj in 1962. Maharashtra was one of the first States to implement the 73rd Amendment provisions in 1992. In 1994, the process of transferring subjects to the Zilla Parishads was initiated. My Government has taken it through to its logical conclusion. In the ongoing process of empowering the community and taking power to the people, my Government has transferred 122 schemes of 9

Administrative Departments, including Social Welfare, Health, Agriculture, Water Supply and Education, to the Zilla Parishads.

21. To promote growth of Information Technology enterprises in the State, the Government has offered certain incentives to IT Establishments, which include allowing 100% additional FSI and permission to set up IT Establishments in 'Residential', 'Industrial', 'Commercial', and to a certain extent, in 'No-Development' zones.

My Government proposes to regularise the Gunthewari development in the State by levying certain regularisation charges and has decided to provide basic amenities on these plots.

Keeping the interest of the cotton textile mill workers in mind and to help rejuvenate and modernize such mills, my Government has formulated a revised policy in respect of redevelopment of 'mill lands'.

22. The Government has recently declared its new Slum Policy for protection of slum dwellers in 61 cities having population of more than 50,000. Accordingly, the slum dwellers, whose names appear in the 1st January 1995 voters list and who are continuously staying there, will be held eligible for protection and Photo passes will be issued to them. No encroachment made after 1st January 1995 will be tolerated.

Taking into consideration the growth of slums in various parts of the State and the unhygienic conditions in those slums, the Government has decided to upgrade the living conditions of the slum dwellers by constructing about 50,000 houses in 60 cities having population of more than 50,000 excluding Mumbai. Under the '**Lok Avas Yojna**', beneficiaries are being provided houses with an area of 225 square feet.

The **Indira Gandhi Vriddha Bhumihiin Shetmajur Sahhaya Yojana** has been revised with effect from 1st July 2000 and assistance under this Scheme has been increased from Rs. 100 to Rs. 250 per month per beneficiary.

Under the **Beedi Gharkul Yojana**, the Government has decided to give subsidy of Rs. 20,000 per tenement for construction of houses for Beedi workers.

My Government has decided to implement a "**Rural Shelter Scheme**" from the coming year. Under which 33,000 houses in rural areas and 18,000 houses in urban towns having less than 50,000 population, making a total of 51,000 houses, will be constructed. In rural areas, each beneficiary will get Central and State subsidy totalling Rs. 10,000. Similarly, subsidy from the Social Welfare and Tribal Development Departments will be available to the beneficiaries from those categories. The income limit for taking advantage under this scheme will be Rs. 32,000 per year, and the cash contribution by the beneficiary will be 10% of the cost of construction. Three types of houses costing Rs. 20,000, 30,000 and Rs. 50,000 are proposed under the scheme.

23. To combat crime, the Government has set up hundred flying squads in Mumbai City. To implement the recommendations of the Justice Srikrishna Commission Report, a Special Task Force has been constituted. The State Human Rights Commission has been set up and will soon start functioning.

The law and order situation in the State continues to remain peaceful and organised crime in Mumbai City has been effectively controlled.

For the modernisation of the State Police Force, a provision of Rs. 184 crore has been made this year to improve mobility, communication, training, intelligence and purchase of equipment.

To increase promotional avenues in the Police Department, 22,344 posts have been upgraded. The minimum educational qualification for recruitment of Police Constables has been raised to XIIth Standard.

24. The Court of Additional District and Sessions Judge at Sangamner, District Ahmednagar has been established from 15th July 2000 and the Link Court of Additional District and Sessions Judge and Civil Judge (Senior Division) at Ahmedpur and Udgir, District Latur have also been established from 10th February 2001.

The XIth Central Finance Commission has recommended establishment of five Additional District and Sessions Courts in every District for speedy disposal of the large number of pending cases in Courts in the State. For establishment of a total of 135 courts in Maharashtra, the Central Government has decided to provide Rs. 54.08 crore under the Five Year Plan of 2000-2005, of which an amount of Rs. 5.44 crore has been placed at the disposal of the State. The action plan for establishment of these Courts from the next financial year has been finalised in consultation with the Bombay High Court, which will be implemented from April 2001.

25. In accordance with the modified policy for development of minor ports through private sector participation, the ports of Dighi and Rewas will be developed by private entrepreneurs. The expected investment is Rs. 2300 crore. On becoming fully operational in 2004, these ports will be capable of handling 12 million tons of cargo.

26. A luxury train is being started in the State on the lines of "**Palace on Wheels**", to attract tourists. The necessary agreement for this purpose has been executed with the Railway Board. A Mumbai Shopping Festival is being organised in the city from 1st May 2001 to attract National and International tourists.

To give boost to Tourism and to give guidance and protection to tourists, the '**Tourist Police**' Scheme has been started.

27. With a view to Universalise Primary Education in the State, and to extend educational facilities to children who were hitherto uncovered, my Government has started the **Mahatma Phule Shikshan Hami Yojana**. Similarly, Primary Educational facilities are being provided within half a kilometer of wadis, padas, tandas and vastis under the **Vasti Shala Yojana**.

The decision of my Government to teach English from the 1st Standard has been successfully implemented and has received very good response. The syllabus for teaching English in the 2nd Standard has now been prepared and necessary preparations for teaching have been completed.

To respect "motherhood", the Government has decided to enter the name of the mother along with the father in the school records.

A Computer Bank has been established and about 3500 Computers have been provided to different schools in Maharashtra. I am happy to note that the Honourable Members of this Legislature have also contributed to the spread of new technology through purchase of Computers for schools through their earmarked funds.

28. To equip all students in Higher, Vocational and Technical Education in basic computer literacy skills, my Government has introduced “**Maharashtra State Certificate Course in Information Technology**”. This programme will give opportunity to around 10 lakh students and 50,000 teachers in various Institutions. This will also help students mainly from rural areas to acquire Information Technology skills. For effective implementation of this programme, my Government has decided to set up the **Maharashtra Dnyan Mandal**.

It has been decided that construction work of 40 Industrial Training Institutes will be taken up during the year 2001-2002. To provide reading facilities to the people, 19 new District Libraries will be opened.

The Government has introduced 30% reservation for women in all Educational Institutions for Degree and polytechnic courses. Consequently, 18,500 seats in Technical Education have been made available to women candidates in these Colleges. The Maharashtra Universities Act, 1994 has also been amended to give specific representation to women and socially backward classes in various Universities bodies.

29. In accordance with the Government's policy to set up Regional Referral Hospitals, work has been taken up at Nashik and Amravati in Phase I. Implementation of the World Bank aided Maharashtra Health Systems Development Project costing Rs. 747.58 crore has been launched under which 144 development works at the District and Sub-divisional level hospitals have been taken up. Under the World Bank assisted Cataract Blindness Control Project, 20 bedded free Eye Wards and Operation Theatres have been set up in 21 District Head Quarters.

Taking note of the importance of the Non-Governmental Organisations in the Aids Control Campaign, 24 Targeted intervention projects with the help of NGOs are being implemented by the Maharashtra State Aids Control Society.

The National Pulse Polio Immunisation Campaign is being vigorously implemented in the State. I am happy to say that as a result of this Campaign, the number of polio cases has been brought down to only 7 till December 2000 and we are well on way to the total eradication of polio from Maharashtra.

In order to strengthen and expand the health facilities in the rural areas, my Government has established 51 Rural Hospitals, 73 Primary Health Centres and 30 Sub-Centres during the last year.

My Government has declared the State Population Policy last year. The Family Planning Programme is being implemented with great enthusiasm with emphasis on educating and motivating the masses for maintaining small families. Steps are also being taken to ensure greater participation of males in the sterilisation programme and to cover couples with two children. The endeavour is to bring down the birth rate from the present 21 to 18 per thousand by the year 2004. My Government is leaving no stone unturned to ensure good quality work in the field of family planning.

30. The Government has decided to upgrade the facilities in the Medical Colleges in the State by providing the latest and State-of-the-art medical equipment. As part of this programme, equipment such as C.T. Scan machines, various critical cardiac care machines and non-invasive machines

have been provided at Government Medical Colleges in Aurangabad and Pune.

Considering the growing incidence of hepatitis B, the Government has provided necessary facilities at the Super Speciality Hospital, Nagpur.

Keeping in view the growing need for cancer treatment for women from the weaker sections of the Society, the Government has decided to set up the first Women's Cancer Treatment Centre in the State at the Cama and Albless Government Hospital, Mumbai. This centre will have the Tele-Cobalt Machine, Brachy Therapy Machine and the Treatment Planning System costing Rs. 252 lakhs. The centre is expected to be commissioned by 31st March 2001.

My Government has decided to provide question papers for the Medical Common Entrance Examination in Marathi and Urdu also, in addition to English for the convenience of the multi-lingual people in the State from the year 2001.

31. 9.5% of the total State Plan Budgetable outlay amounting to Rs. 551 crore is earmarked for the Special Component Plan for socio-economic development of the Scheduled Caste communities.

32. The Government has earmarked an outlay of Rs. 450 crore for the Tribal Sub Plan for the year 2001-2002, which amounts to 9% of the budgetable outlay of the State Plan.

33. The year 2001 is being observed as "**Women's Empowerment Year**". The Government has declared Women's Policy – 2001 for women's empowerment. The policy shall be placed for discussion in this Session in the Sate Legislature.

Under the Special Component Programme, a “ **Women’s Empowerment Programme for Scheduled Caste Women** ” will be implemented on pilot basis in selected districts. The present National Initiative for Children Protection through Childline, which is being implemented in Mumbai and Nagpur, will be extended to the entire State.

Under the World Bank assisted Integrated Child Development Scheme Project III, 99 new projects covering 14,450 **anganwadis** and 8 lakh beneficiaries, are being set up. The total investment of the World Bank on this Project is Rs. 281 crore and the State share is Rs. 210 crore.

34. The ‘Maulana Azad Minorities Financial Development Corporation’ has been established and the Minorities Commission has been revived.

Keeping in view the importance of Agra in the life History of **Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj**, my Government has extended financial support for installation of an astride horse statue of **Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj** at Agra, which was unveiled on the occasion of **Shiv Jayanti** this year.

My Government has decided to celebrate the 2600th birth anniversary of Shri Bhagwan Mahavir in 2001, as **Jankalyan Mahotsav** and has constituted a Committee to make recommendations in this regard.

35. In order to expedite a solution to the long-pending Maharashtra Karnataka Border Dispute, the members of the High Power Committee of Government of Maharashtra called on the Prime Minister on 22nd August 2000 at New Delhi and on 17th February 2001 at Mumbai. The Prime Minister agreed to help to amicably resolve the issue in a joint meeting with the Chief Ministers of Karnataka and Maharashtra.

36. The ban on the use of thin plastic bags is being strictly implemented in all the Municipal Corporation and

Municipal Council areas of the State, from 15th August 2000. The visible impact of this regulation has been felt in all major cities, especially on sea shores and public places in Mumbai.

37. Honourable Members, during the present Session, you will be considering the Supplementary Demands, the Budget for 2001-2002, the Vote on Account, the Bills to convert certain Ordinances into Acts and new Bills of urgent nature and other Government as well as non-official urgent business, which may be brought before you for consideration.

I wish your deliberations during the present Session every success.

JAI HIND ! JAI MAHARASHTRA !