



सत्यमेव जयते

ADDRESS

delivered by

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GOVERNOR OF MAHARASHTRA

JOINT SESSION OF THE MAHARASHTRA LEGISLATURE AT MUMBAI

18th March 1996

MR. CHAIRMAN, MR. SPEAKER AND HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

I welcome you for the first Session of the State Legislature for the year 1996. It is a year since the new Government assumed power in Maharashtra. I am happy that my Government has been working steadfastly to fulfil its assurances in the manifesto (Vachannama). The Government has also addressed itself to some of the basic issues relating to the life of the common man and the future course of development of Maharashtra. This has led to formulation of far-reaching policies in respect of Drinking Water Supply, Slum Redevelopment, Education, and Industry, Trade and Commerce. My Government is keenly aware that formulation of policies is but a first step and it is, therefore, pursuing vigorously the implementation of these policies so that the intended benefits actually reach the people.

2. The State has suffered irreparable loss in the sad demise of Shri Hashu Advani, Minister for Finance, Planning and State Excise, and other distinguished members of this Legislature. I request all of you to join me in paying our respectful homage to them.

3. Amity and goodwill prevailed among all castes and communities since the last one year. Law and order was maintained and there was no communal strife, or incident whatsoever.

It has been Government's policy to be even-handed and fair towards all the residents of the State. But at the same

time Government is alert to the problem of illegal immigrants and would not hesitate to take stringent action against them.

My Government has revised the pay-scales of the Police Force substantially and active measures are being taken to provide houses to all the policemen.

Since the responsibility for law and order in the State is with the Police, it is the policy of my Government that the Police Force should be equipped with sophisticated and modern weaponry, and Government has decided to supply them with such equipment.

In order to afford more opportunities to women, in the year 1995, 10 per cent of the personnel recruited in the Police Force were women against only 3.8 per cent in the year 1994.

Drastic and vigorous steps have been taken to book offenders against women. A special Cell has been set up in the Police Headquarters to investigate offences against women, and Special Courts have been constituted at Nagpur and Mumbai to try such offences. The High Court has been requested to designate two Courts at Mumbai, and one Court each at Pune, Nagpur, Amravati, Thane and Bhandara for this purpose. In addition, nine new Special Courts are also being constituted including one at Jalgaon. Vigilance Committees have been established at the District and Taluka levels.

4. Despite being the official language of the State for over three decades, Marathi did not get its due importance and status in official and legislative business. My Government has brought into force the relevant statutory provisions on 15th August 1995, which have given Marathi, primacy in Official and Legislative business. All Bills are introduced and

passed in Marathi in the Legislature. Similarly all Acts are published, and all Ordinances promulgated in Marathi.

5. In the interest of 24 lakh cotton cultivators, persistent efforts were made with the Central Government, which resulted in the extension of the Monopoly Cotton Procurement Scheme upto 30th June 1996. A remunerative price of Rs. 2,100 per quintal for the "H4 super" variety of cotton was announced in the beginning of the season. This price is comparatively much higher than that prevailing in the neighbouring States. If Central Government sanctions an independent export quota for Maharashtra Cotton Growers Marketing Federation, then a higher price than the present one can be given to Cotton Growers. The State Government will continue to try to obtain such an export quota from the Central Government. To ensure timely payment to the farmers, the Government has, in an extraordinary initiative, made available stupendous amount of Rs. 940 crores to the Scheme. These decisions taken by my Government to safeguard the interests of Cotton Growers are unprecedented.

6. The year 1994-95 saw a bumper sugarcane crop which left a record balance of 14 lakh tonnes of sugar at the end of the year. This resulted in the locking up of funds of the sugar factories and consequent difficulties in payment of sugarcane price to the farmers this year. Hence the Central Government was requested to release sugar for export, build up a buffer stock and to ask Banks to treat loans to sugarcane co-operatives as 'Priority Sector Lending'. However, the expected response from the Government of India was not received. Nevertheless the State Government has taken the initiative in ensuring that the factories

continue to crush all available sugarcane. Further, arrangements will also be made to crush the sugarcane belonging to the farmers of the border areas of Maharashtra and Karnataka.

7. As a result of unsatisfactory rainfall, scarcity has been declared in 6,345 Kharif villages from 15 districts and necessary measures are being taken, including creation of employment, to mitigate the scarcity conditions.

Out of 2,114 project-affected families of the Sardar Sarovar Project, who have opted for resettlement in Maharashtra, 1,334 families have been resettled in Maharashtra in five goathans.

My Government had appointed a High-level Committee for suggesting modification in the Rehabilitation Policy for the project affected persons. The Committee has submitted its report recently. On the basis of its recommendations, a new Rehabilitation Policy and Legislation will be framed soon.

As a part of Maharashtra Composite Irrigation Project III aided by the World Bank, a new scheme for the socio-economic rehabilitation of project-affected persons has been formulated in January 1996. This comprehensive scheme provides for assistance to those not eligible earlier, upgradation of existing amenities, improvement of housing, provision of irrigation facilities and increased income for project-affected persons.

8. Under a centrally sponsored scheme, computerisation of land records was taken up in Wardha District on a pilot basis and now it is being implemented in 13 more Districts.

In order to easily make available copies of 7/12 extracts to landholders, a scheme for their distribution on a date announced in advance has been formulated.

9. Statutory Development Boards set up for Vidarbha, Marathwada and the Rest of Maharashtra were from the start involved in the preparation of the plans and programmes for development and removal of regional imbalances in the State. Further, for the first time, from the current year's plan, there is equitable allocation of development funds for each Development Board area. Similarly it is mandatory that the amounts allotted should be spent within the Development Board area only. The Indicators and Backlog Committee was reconstituted in November 1995. The Committee will decide on appropriate indicators for assessing the relative levels of development and suggest measures for bringing about balanced regional development.

Government is committed to ensure balanced development of the whole State. The government has decided to implement time-bound programmes for Vidarbha and Marathwada within the next 3-4 years. A similar programme is being formulated for the Konkan region also.

10. The Special Component Plan is a programme for the benefit of the Scheduled Castes. My Government has taken a policy decision to implement the Special Component Plan on the lines of the Tribal Sub-Plan. The Government has made far-reaching changes in the programme to ensure that these benefits actually reach them. The Social Welfare Department has been entrusted with the responsibility both for its formulation and implementation, and also for

monitoring the latter. The size of the Special Component Plan will also be increased in proportion to the population of the Scheduled Castes in the State. Maharashtra is the first State to take such a bold and revolutionary step in the country, and this has been widely acclaimed.

11. My Government has fulfilled its commitment to freeze till June 2000 A.D. the retail prices of five essential commodities supplied through the Public Distribution System.

For the effective implementation of the Consumers' Protection Act, 1986 my Government has set up a High-power Consumer Welfare Committee.

In order to ensure that no citizen of the State starves, my Government has launched the Zunka Bhakar Scheme. At present more than 1,600 Centres are functioning. About six lakh people avail of this facility every day.

12. An assistance of Rs.11.69 crores was provided to the farmers affected by natural calamities this year. As a part of its commitment to revamp the Crop Insurance Scheme my Government has already decided to bear the entire cost of the premium in case of small and marginal farmers as against 50 per cent. being borne earlier.

Maharashtra is a progressive State as far as agriculture is concerned. A new comprehensive agricultural policy, covering new technology, agro-processing industries and incentives for export of agricultural produce, is being formulated. For this purpose, on the basis of "Udyog Mitra",

a common forum for farmers, agricultural experts and agro-based entrepreneurs called "Krishi Udyog Mitra" has been set up. This will not only ensure rural development but also provide jobs to lakhs of young persons.

Two important long delayed projects at Katol and Morshi, for the processing of oranges, which are important from the Orange Growers' point of view, will be commissioned on or about 1st May 1996.

Out of the one lakh 70 thousand farmers who had paid the requisite amount up to end of the March 1995, one lakh have already been provided electricity connections for their pumps this year, which will help to irrigate additional five lakh acres. By the end of June, 1996 all the remaining 70,000 pending applications will also be cleared. This coverage will be a record achievement for the Maharashtra State Electricity Board.

In accordance with my Government's commitment to preservation of cow progeny, a Bill making necessary amendment to the Animal Preservation Act, has been passed to impose a total ban on slaughter of cow progeny.

To encourage milk producers, the milk purchase price has been increased by Rupee 1 per litre from 1st November 1995, benefitting 20 lakh milk-producers.

13. My Government is committed to implement a major programme approved by NCDC for modernisation of powerlooms and for financial assistance to powerloom co-operative societies. It is estimated to cost about Rs. 25 crores. Similarly a process and dye house is being established at Nagpur for processing handloom cloth.

14. In order to ensure full utilisation by 2000 A. D. of the State's share of Krishna waters, Maharashtra Krishna Valley Development Corporation has been set up. In the current financial year, an amount of Rs. 487 crores is provided for irrigation projects in the Krishna Valley. It is expected that the Corporation will be able to raise substantial funds to supplement its budgetary allocation.

My Government has set up a Second Irrigation Commission to review comprehensively the availability of the water resources in the State, their optimum utilisation and other related issues.

In order to complete all irrigation projects in the next seven to ten years, it is necessary to attract substantial investment from the private sector. 52 irrigation and 22 hydro-electric projects have since been identified for this purpose.

Many out of the seven thousand ex-malgujari tanks in Vidarbha with irrigation potential of more than one lakh hectares need special repairs. These will now be taken up under a special scheme to realise their full irrigation potential.

The State Government is revamping the "Water Conservation Programme" by emphasising the role of peoples' participation in the programme.

15. Government reviewed the Dabhol Power Project and as it was not in the interest of the people of Maharashtra, decided to cancel it. The Dabhol Power Company offered to renegotiate the project and requested for its revival. My Government considered the request and renegotiated the project through a Committee of Experts and decided

to revive the project with suitable amendments and safeguards. The renegotiated project provides for reduction in capital cost and tariff, additional environmental safeguards, 30 per cent equity participation in the Dabhol Power Company, by MSEB, reduction in outflow of foreign exchange and package of benefits for the local community. A saving of Rs. 25,000 crores is expected over the next 20 years on account of reduced tariff. It is obvious that thus, the benefit has been obtained only on account of the cancellation of the original agreement, and this saved the consumers from bearing a heavy burden. The benefits of renegotiation have not been confined to Maharashtra alone but it has been helpful to other States in negotiating with Independent Power Producers for the setting up of such projects.

Government has approved two other projects in the private sector and these three independent power projects will add 3,676 megawatts to the existing capacity. My Government has announced a liberalised policy for projects costing upto Rs. 400 crores. Similarly, a more liberal policy has been laid down for captive generation of power. Entrepreneurs willing to set up non-conventional power projects have been offered attractive tariff and they will be permitted to wheel and bank the energy generated. All these measures will not only make the State self-sufficient in power by 2000 A. D., but will also enable Maharashtra to supply its surplus power to neighbouring States.

16. Maharashtra has maintained its pre-eminent position in industry in the country. Industrial Entrepreneur's Memoranda filed and Letters of Intent issued, are indicators of the rate of industrial progress. Maharashtra has the largest number of these approvals (excluding certain large projects). A review of IEM/LOI filed or issued in the first

eleven months of this financial year shows that an investment of Rupees 33,000 crores will emanate from them. The Government of India has indicated, that approvals to foreign Direct Investment proposal in Maharashtra upto December, 1995, totalled Rupees 2251 crores, the highest in the country.

My Government has announced an integrated Industry, Trade and Commerce Policy 1995, in the Winter Session of the Legislature. The Policy focusses on improvement in infrastructure, simplification of procedure and rationalization of incentives for developing areas. My Government proposes to set up at 9 locations large industrial townships with five star infrastructure to attract large industries and foreign investment. Setting up of small units will receive all necessary encouragement. About 30,000 new small scale units will be set up every year, creating employment opportunities for one lakh persons. The Government has decided to guarantee loans to artisans for financing about 10,000 units annually, which will provide employment opportunities for 30,000 persons.

A comprehensive law which will repeal the Bombay Industrial Relations Act, 1946 and fully protect the rights of the workers will be brought before the Legislature soon.

The administration is giving top-most priority to take effective steps to tackle the employment problem. A high-level Committee headed by the Chief Minister, including experienced persons and experts from various fields, will go into the myriad aspects of the problem and suggest comprehensive solutions. The committee is expected to give its report within 6 months.

17. The prestigious Konkan Railway Project is nearing completion. The entire line is expected to be ready for goods traffic soon, and in the near future, also for the passenger traffic. The State Government has contributed Rs. 132 crores towards equity, and loans of Rs. 125 crores from the Mumbai Metropolitan Regional Development Authority.

My Government has decided to set up a Maharashtra Maritime Board for speedier development of the ports. It has also been decided that private investment in port development should be encouraged so as to promote industry, trade and water transport. Techno-economic feasibility studies for 7 projects have been taken up, for being developed through private sector.

18. Government has extended to senior citizens, 50 per cent. concession in the normal fare for travel in State Transport buses from January, 1996.

19. Private sector participation in Road Development will be encouraged. The Bombay Motor Vehicles Tax Act will be amended for this purpose and a Road Development Corporation will also be set up. Pre-qualification bids for the construction of the Mumbai-Pune Expressway have been received. Similarly, offers have been received for a continuous fly-over above three junctions near Andheri on Western Express Highway. Preliminary steps are being taken for construction of Mumbai-Talasari, Mumbai-Nashik and Mumbai-Sawantwadi Expressways.

20. My Government has started implementation of "Nav Sanjeevan Yojana" to tackle the problem of malnutrition and ill-health among the tribals. The Nav Sanjeevan Yojana aims at co-ordinating implementation of various programmes

for providing sufficient employment opportunities, clean drinking water, supplementary nutritious food and prompt health care services. The Grain Bank Scheme has been started in tribal areas in order to ensure continuous availability of foodgrains.

In order to supervise quality of education in 720 Ashram Schools, the Government has decided to establish one central Ashram School for a group of five Ashram Schools. Further, it has been decided to open Industrial Training Institutes in all the 68 talukas in the Tribal Sub-Plan area.

21. It is under consideration of my Government to open from the academic year 1996-97 Public Schools for meritorious students belonging to Vimukta Jatis and Nomadic Tribes, and Ashram Schools for the Scheduled Caste students and a Residential School at Nagpur for the children of Safai Kamgars. Programme for setting up of Government and aided hostels has been taken up on a large scale.

My Government has approved the "Matoshri Yojana" for setting up of well-equipped Old Age Home in every district on the lines of "Ramadham" through voluntary organisations. Government will provide free of charge to the selected voluntary organisation five acres of land, 100 per cent. grant-in-aid, and building grant to the tune of Rs. 50 lakhs. Suitable sites have been selected in almost all the Districts. Actual work has since been started and these homes are expected to be ready by March, 1997.

22. My Government is determined to achieve universalisation of Primary Education by 2000 A. D. This involves 100 per cent. enrollment of children in the

age group of 6-14 years, 90 per cent. attendance and attainment of minimum level of learning by all children.

Government has therefore decided to impose a ban on transfer of primary teachers for next three years and not to burden them with any non-educational work, except census and elections. Twenty-five thousand additional primary teachers will be recruited and trained in the next five years.

Under the School-feeding programme in 171 blocks, foodgrains are being provided in the form of rice at the rate of 3 kg. per student per month for all students in the 1st to 5th standards.

In 103 Blocks where female literacy is below the national level, free uniforms and writing material will be provided to all the children in the first standard and free textbooks will be given to all the students in the 1st to 4th standards.

For children of workers who migrate to sugar factory areas, 25 schools will be opened near such sugar factories and 25 schools will be opened in those villages from which the workers have migrated.

All girls studying in 5th to 10th standard will be given free passes to travel by State Transport buses from their home to the school and back. In the nine districts in the State where female literacy is below national level, 50 per cent seats in D.Ed. Colleges will be reserved for girls where they will be given free education.

The Government has decided to celebrate "Girl Child Day" on 3rd January every year to commemorate the

birthday of Savitribai Phule who pioneered female education in the country.

There will be compulsory registration of all pre-primary educational institutions. There will be total ban on interviews of parents or children at the time of admission to the pre-primary school and no books will be allowed to be prescribed for such classes.

23. My Government has decided to provide free education to all children upto 10th standard, make enrollment compulsory in N.C.C. for one year, and for schools sanctioned from 1996-97 onwards, 50 per cent. grant from second year and 100 per cent. grant after inspection in the third year. Schools in the tribal Sub-Plan area will receive 100 per cent. grant from second year itself. Schools with poor performance will be closed down if they do not show improvement.

One Sainik School will be set up in each district from 1996-97. Each Sainik School will be provided 30 acres of Government land on 30 years' lease and it will be eligible for regular grant-in-aid.

24. My Government will set up an Industrial Training Institute (ITI) in each taluka with six courses including two courses exclusively for women. So far, 48 ITIs have been started during the current year. There will also be a Government aided degree college in each taluka. Voluntary agencies will be given financial assistance for setting up women's hostels in each taluka.

Government will take stringent steps to curb the trend towards commercialisation of education.

25. My Government has decided to establish a Krida Vidyapeeth at Pune. It will also establish 14 Krida

Prabodhinis (Sports Academies), and a Coaching Centre for Wrestling to promote excellence in sports and physical education.

26. To preserve the rich and varied artistic heritage of Maharashtra and to encourage young and promising artistes, my Government has established a Kala Academy at Mumbai at an estimated cost of Rs. 25 crores.

27. A State-wide Pulse Polio Immunization Campaign was organised during which polio vaccine was given to approximately 72 lakh children.

Under the new Drishti Daan Scheme, free eye check up has been done in respect of one lakh twenty thousand students in tribal areas. By the end of March, 1996, 12,000 children will be provided with spectacles free of cost.

In order to bring uniformity and to maintain high standard in various disciplines of medical education, it has been decided, in principle, to establish a separate University for Medical Education in the State shortly.

A Super-speciality hospital with the latest equipment and amenities has started functioning at Nagpur.

The Government has approved a Master Plan providing for establishment of 98 Rural hospitals, 416 Primary Health Centres and 2,538 Sub-Centres.

28. The new drinking water policy embodied in the White Paper prepared by my Government provides for increase in the per capita availability of drinking water from 40 to 55 litres per day, non-insistence on popular contribution from local self-governing bodies towards the capital cost, and the coverage of all villages within a period of five years. A separate Department to implement this policy has already been set up.

The problem of rural sanitation is very acute particularly for women. My Government has therefore decided to undertake a massive programme for construction of a toilet for every family in rural areas. 1996-97 will be observed as "Rural Sanitation Year" and it is proposed to construct 5 lakh toilets in 1996-97.

Similarly, under the Indira Awaas Yojana, in the rural areas of the State, permanent houses of standard quality will be built at a cost of Rs. 30,000 each by supplementing the Central fund with additional money from the State.

29. My Government is determined to provide free tenements to house 40 lakh slum-dwellers in Brihan Mumbai. It has now formulated a self-financing scheme for providing a tenement of 225 square feet to eligible slum-dweller in Mumbai. A statutory Slum Rehabilitation Authority has been constituted for implementation of the Scheme in Brihan Mumbai. In the meantime, under the existing Slum Redevelopment Scheme, 154 proposals have been approved and actual construction has started at 33 sites.

In Brihan Mumbai, it has become necessary to reconstruct old and dilapidated buildings. With this end in view, Government has decided to appoint a Study Group to carry out a comprehensive study of the subject for further necessary action.

30. In Brihan Mumbai to mitigate the traffic problem, the State Government has made a time-bound and ambitious plan at a cost of Rs. 1300 crores to construct 35 fly-overs and 8 pedestrian subways on three Express highways, and widening of the Express highways and some additional new links.

As regards BUTP-II, the Indian Railways have already selected consultants for the studies required by the World Bank, and BMRDA has also commissioned two studies relating to BUTP-II.

As a result of persistent efforts by Government, the Planning Commission has given approval to the Belapur-Panvel and Thane-Turbhe-Nerul Railway lines with CIDCO participation.

Under the Mega City Scheme for Mumbai Metropolitan Region, development projects worth Rs. 266 crores have been approved.

31. With a view to evolving alternative to octroi, account-based cess on entry of goods will be introduced in the area of Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation.

32. My Government has now undertaken an innovative reform in the field of commodity taxation. The first phase of the programme will involve replacement of the existing Sales Tax system by a full-fledged Value Added Tax System. I would like to stress that amongst all the States in India, Maharashtra is the pioneer in this regard.

For the development of Nagpur the second Capital, my Government has decided to sanction Rs. 15 crores every year for a period of 5 years from 1995-96. A new urban centre to be called Meghdoot is to be set up in the vicinity of Nagpur.

33. A basic concern of my Government is the provision of employment to the unemployed in rural and urban areas. The norms of Employment Guarantee Scheme were relaxed to facilitate greater employment and creation of productive assets. Employment of 9 crore mandays is expected to be generated during the year under the Scheme.

The Scheme launched by my Government as the " Adarsha Gaon Yojana " to develop at least one village in each taluka on Ralegan Siddhi model will be implemented as a State-level scheme hereafter.

Effective implementation of Nehru Rozgar Yojana has resulted in setting up of 66,866 micro-enterprises and employment generation of 41 lakh mandays.

The Government shall also effectively implement the Prime Minister's Integrated Urban Poverty Eradication Programme in 28 towns. The expenditure on the Scheme is to be shared between the Centre and State Government.

My Government has decided to reimburse the travelling expenses of those unemployed persons who are called for interview for a permanent post by the Maharashtra Public Service Commission, Subordinate Service Selection Boards, Autonomous Bodies, various Undertakings and other institutions under the control of the Government of Maharashtra.

In order to enable unemployed Civil and Electrical Engineers to enter the construction industry, it has been decided to register them with the Public Works Department in Class VI and Class D, respectively, and to award one small work to them without inviting tenders.

34. With the assistance of the World Bank, the Earthquake Rehabilitation Programme (MEERP) is to be implemented over a three year period ending June, 1997. Almost 11,000 houses have been completed in relocation villages and in 23 villages, houses have been handed over

to the beneficiaries. Five major water supply schemes are being executed for the relocation villages. The work of economic rehabilitation in the affected areas is almost complete. The repairs and strengthening component of the programme has made rapid progress in the last two months. The total expenditure on the programme as on 31st December 1995 was Rs. 442 crores against the revised programme cost of Rs. 1139 crores.

35. The Maharashtra-Karnataka Border dispute is pending for a long time. Immediately on assumption of office in March, 1995, my Government has taken up the matter with the Central Government. In August, 1995, the State Legislature unanimously resolved that the Government of India should intervene and resolve the issue on the basis of the three principles advocated by the Government of Maharashtra. This resolution has been sent to the Central Government. To solve this problem urgently, the Chief Minister has discussed this issue with the Honourable Prime Minister and has been pursuing it continuously. My Government hopes that the Central Government will find a solution to this problem in a time-bound manner.

36. State Minorities Commission was set up in March, 1992 for a period of three years. This period expired in March, 1995. All citizens in Maharashtra are equal. Therefore my Government's policy is that it is not proper to make distinction between minority and majority groups. It is the policy of the Government to be fair and just towards all its citizens. Therefore the Government has consciously decided that there is no need to extend the duration of the said Minorities Commission.

Fellow-feeling and amity have prevailed between different communities in the State during the last one year. My

Government feels that this atmosphere should not be vitiated and the bitter memories of communal riots of 1992-93 should not be revived. With this end in view, Government has decided to wind up the Srikrishna Commission.

37. Honourable Members, during the present Session you have to consider supplementary demands, interim budget 1996-97, Vote on Account, Bills to convert certain Ordinances into Acts, pending Bills 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 !