

FEBRUARY 25, 1983

Honourable Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly,

As the Governor of the State, I have the privilege of addressing this august House for the first time. I take this opportunity to welcome you all to the second session of the Seventh Kerala Legislative Assembly and to convey to you and to the people of the State my heartiest greetings. I have pleasure in outlining to you briefly my Government's policies and programmes.

My predecessor-in-office, when she addressed the first session of this Assembly, had detailed the major objectives behind the policies of my Government and I am glad to say that within the short period many of these objectives have been realised in a substantial measure. My Government's policy of constructive co-operation with the Central Government has helped the State in getting a fair and sympathetic consideration at the hands of the Central Government. We have been able to finalise the details regarding the acquisition of land for Naval Academy at Ezhimala, expedite the establishment, and in fact the expenditure expenses of the Navy Physical and Oceanographic Laboratory to be located at Cochin and to persuade the Central Government to establish an Air Force Unit at Trivandrum. The Naval Base at Cochin is also slated for development. Apart from the Caprolactum Plant at Cochin already sanctioned, we have also been pressing for the early establishment of the Aromatics Plant at Ambalamugal. We have also received sympathetic consideration regarding our food allocation, and problems of cashew and coir industries. My Government have also been pressing for the establishment of a Free Trade Zone at Cochin. My Government confidently hope that the Central Government would take a more positive interest in increasing Central investment in this State in the future.

My Government can modestly claim that the law and order situation has been extremely satisfactory. Even in isolated cases of sporadic violence my Government were able to contain the disturbances in a very short time and also prevent its spreading to other areas.

On the labour front also, there has been a definite change for the better and there now prevails a happy environment. Many factories which had remained closed when my Government assumed office have since been reopened. In spite of the unprecedented fall in prices of cashew, my Government were also able to resolve the problems faced by the cashew growers and workers last year and operate the factories in a satisfactory manner.

My Government also took prompt action to apprehend the persons alleged to have been responsible for the Vypeen liquor tragedy and have been pursuing with all seriousness the criminal cases pending against them.

On the economic front, although my Government assumed office with considerable financial burden my Government were able to implement programmes for the upliftment of the poor, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in a very significant manner. As indicated by my predecessor, my Government have also been able to implement the Agricultural Workers' Pension and Unemployment Allowance Scheme which had been kept in abeyance since 1981, after modifying them suitably to ensure that the benefits reach only the eligible persons. My Government have also been able to implement with vigour the New 20-point Programme of the Prime Minister and expect to achieve the targets set forth in many of the areas specified therein.

As promised, my Government have clearly spelt out an Industrial Policy for attracting the investors and entrepreneurs.

On the whole, I am glad to say that my Government have been able to fulfil the commitments made to the people and realise in a large measure the goals set forth in my predecessor's address to you.

However, in this situation, when my Government were trying to improve the working of the Governmental machinery as a whole and achieve the objectives set forth, there have been difficulties caused by the unprecedented drought affecting the State and its attendant adverse effects on our resource position. Power

production has fallen resulting in a loss of revenue to the tune of Rs. 30 crores to the State, and leading to imposition of a power-cut on industrial consumers with multi faceted adverse reactions. There is no doubt that the power shortage which has occurred after the State has enjoyed surplus power situation for the past few years has struck a heavy blow to the economy of the State.

It is in such circumstances when natural calamities have struck the State leading to unexpected problems that there should be close co-operation amongst all sections of the people in understanding and appreciating the seriousness of the problems facing the State caused by reasons beyond the control of the Government. My Government are sure that the people of Kerala are aware of the unkind cut of Nature this year and the consequential problems, and will extend their wholehearted co-operation to the Government in meeting the situation.

At the time of its assumption of office, my Government had to undertake the onerous burden of clearing an overdraft of Rs. 145 crores including the ways and means outstanding at that time. As a measure of enforcing stricter financial discipline on the national front, the Central Government agreed to convert the accumulated deficits of the States on 31-3-1982 into medium term loans; but at the same time insisted on the immediate clearance of future overdrafts within stipulated periods. As a result, the State Government which till recently had enjoyed an overdraft facility even upto Rs. 145 crores are now not only obliged to clear the entire outstanding overdraft, but are also restrained from crossing the ways and means advance limit of Rs. 30 crores for more than a period of 7 consecutive days. This squeezing of credit facility coupled with the erosion of estimated revenue as a result of the unprecedented drought has caused great strain on our State's finances. My Government trust that the Central Government will realise the difficulties of the State in tiding over the present situation in a short period and provide us immediately adequate assistance.

Honourable Members will agree that in order to tone up public administration and improve the lot of the common man, it is necessary to ensure that corruption is eliminated at all levels. Since early 1960s efforts are afoot to control this evil phenomenon but they have not succeeded in full measure. My Government propose to intensify the activities of the Vigilance Department against erring and corrupt officials, and introduce a comprehensive legislation to probe into allegations of misconduct and charges of corruption against 'public men'.

My Government have already initiated steps for improving the planning process in the State and have for the first time, set up high level committees to examine and make recommendations regarding the perspectives of development of different areas and sectors during the coming years upto 2000 AD. My Government trust that the recommendations of these high level committees would be available before the formulation of the Seventh Five Year Plan and help us to give a meaningful direction to the planning process of the State in the future.

The Annual Plan outlay for 1983-84 has now been fixed at Rs. 320 crores which is the highest approved outlay so far achieved. In the first year of the Plan period despite the comfortable cash position of the State and also advance Central Plan assistance, the State could get approved only annual plan outlay of the order of Rs. 275 crores. The outlay was fixed at the same level during the second year also.

In the context of the present financial difficulties faced by the State, Honourable Members will appreciate that the significant step up in the annual plan outlay for next year has been made possible by a sympathetic understanding of our special problems by the Central Government and its willingness to give us our due share consistent with our resources.

I am glad also to say that my Government have succeeded in formulating the district plans for the welfare of Scheduled Castes and as a first step in decentralisation, intend to implement the plans for the welfare of Scheduled Castes at the district level. My Government are also formulating detailed proposals for decentralising plan implementation as a whole at the district level.

In my Government's policies and programmes, paramount importance will be given to the welfare of Scheduled Castes and Tribes. This has given a new momentum to the implementation of the schemes for Scheduled Castes and Tribes. Apart from vigorously implementing the district plans for the Scheduled Castes and tribal sub-plan for the Scheduled Tribes, my Government will undertake activities to ensure better employment prospects for them. The employment of Scheduled Castes and Tribes in public sector undertakings is being watched and prompt corrective action initiated. Training programmes by the department, industrial undertakings and other agencies will be stepped up in such a way as to ensure that Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe candidates are available with adequate skills for employment. A training programme for them or obtaining better representation in the recruitment to the army will be implemented in the course of the year.

The activities of the Kerala State Development Corporation for Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes for the economic development of these weaker sections of society will receive the special attention of my Government. My Government will also vigorously pursue the matter of mobilising institutional finance for Scheduled Castes and Tribes. The functioning of harijan and girijan co-operative societies will be geared up and industrial co-operatives will be set up to contribute to the economic advancement of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes, especially those trained in the departmental institutions. My Government will also relentlessly pursue their drive against all forms of untouchability.

Efforts will be taken to improve the lot of the Christian converts by channelising adequate funds for their welfare programmes.

Keenly aware of the problems faced by those engaged in tapping of palmyrah palm and the processing of related articles, my Government had asked a Special Officer to examine and submit a report. An interim report has been received and the final report is expected shortly. My Government will take measures including the formation of a Corporation, if need be, to implement the report.

Implementation of land reforms is almost nearing completion. Since April, 1982 an extent of 3872 acres of land have been ordered for surrender and 1562 acres have been assigned. My Government hope to achieve a target of assigning 2500 acres during the year.

The Housing Scheme for the benefit of Kudikidappukars has received greater attention and 8000 applications for housing have been sanctioned and the first instalment of Rs. 2000 has been given during this year, as against 451 during the previous year. The target of assisting 10,000 Kudikidappukars is expected to be achieved before 31st March, 1983.

My Government will also expand the scope of assistance for the rehabilitation of ex-landowners badly affected by land reforms and will expand its operation now confined to Palghat District to other districts also. Significant strides have also been made in assigning land to eligible persons, including Malayora Karshakars and Fishermen. Necessary steps are being taken to speed up this process.

As an effective style of developmental administration and a means to realise the felt needs of our rural areas, Gramotsavas initiated during this year in 66 panchayats have been a success and my Government propose to extend its coverage to selected panchayats with more purposeful and active participation by Government and Semi-Government agencies and the local people, during the coming year.

My Government have approached the Government of India to increase the allotment of rice to our State and we expect a favourable response. However, to ensure equitable distribution of the available supply, my Government will further consolidate and strengthen the public distribution system. This will be supplemented by expanding the activities of the Civil Supplies Corporation. Apart from the 101 Maveli Stores now in force 550 Sahakarana Maveli Stores have been chosen as recognised retail outlets. Two more mobile Maveli Stores will be commissioned next year. One floating Maveli Store is proposed for catering to the requirements of the water logged areas of Kuttanad.

My Government's strategy of development in the agricultural sector will be aimed at providing a new momentum to agricultural production in the State. Our plan of action will lay emphasis on implementing the new 20-point Programme announced by the Prime Minister. Besides providing incentives to the farmers for raising vegetables and subsidiary crops, my Government will also encourage dry land farming in micro water sheds to optimise yield.

With a view to revitalising the agriculture sector, the Training and Visit System of agricultural extension will be put to optimum use in providing professional agricultural advice to the farmers. As a secondary source of energy for cooking and lighting purposes, my Government intend to set up 12,500 biogas plants in the State next year.

In keeping with the spirit of the new 20-point Programme, the activities under social forestry will receive the special attention of my Government. At the same time, my Government will also adopt positive measures to preserve the forest areas and amendments, as required, will be made to the Forest Act. My Government will take necessary steps to raise a Forest Development Fund.

Under the Operation Flood-II Programme, my Government have already taken up construction of dairy units at Alleppey and Quilon. Construction of the remaining dairy units at Trivandrum, Ernakulam and Trichur will be started next year. Expeditionary steps are being taken to set up a Cheese Plant at Peermade. Construction of the Cattle Feed Plant at Thuravoor in Alleppey District is making steady progress. To bring together the offices of the Agriculture and allied departments under one roof, my Government will set up Krishi Bhavans in all the Panchayats in a phased manner.

My Government propose to assist 6000 harijan families and 3000 tribal families to take up Animal Husbandry Programmes. A programme for creation of a Disease Free Zone in certain regions of the State will also be implemented.

Twenty thousand farm families will be assisted by providing Cattle Insurance cover for their cattle and buffaloes against death and disability. Duck farmers belonging to weaker sections will be assisted to get their duck units insured. My Government will strengthen animal health cover by opening new hospitals and dispensaries.

In the field of fisheries, accent will be laid on increasing the production of fish both from the marine sector and the inland sector. Welfare measures for the fishermen will be pursued vigorously with special emphasis on the implementation of subsidised housing scheme. Special schemes will be implemented for the benefit of fishermen belonging to Scheduled Castes and Tribes.

The working of the Kerala Fisheries Corporation will be toned up and its activities in the field of deep-sea fishing and internal marketing will be revitalised.

An integrated approach will be adopted for improving the quality of life in fishermen villages by providing various infrastructural facilities. The village welfare societies will be activated by constituting their managing committees and they will be entrusted with various welfare and developmental activities for the benefit of the fishermen members.

The main thrust of the National Rural Employment Programme is to create durable community assets while providing employment to the underemployed and unemployed agricultural labourers and small and marginal farmers. Sufficient care is being taken to ensure that the durable community assets created under the National Rural Employment Programme would improve infrastructure facilities necessary for development of the rural community as a whole.

Under the Integrated Rural Development Programme, it is proposed that 86,400 families would be assisted to cross the poverty line during the next financial year. The number of families covered during the current financial year is well above the targeted figure of 86,400 families and it is expected that the tempo built up during the month-long intensive drive in February 1983 would be continued through the next year. The Development Department proposes to implement the programme with full participation of all sections of the public and the aim of the programme is to raise the living standard of the poorest of the poor in rural areas.

It will be my Government's endeavour to fully exploit the facilities offered by the co-operative sector for the betterment of the people by extending the credit coverage, housing assistance, consumer services training facilities and harijan/girijan development programmes. Efforts will be made to bring more and more, harijans and girijans and women under the co-operative fold. The lending programme of the co-operatives will be stepped up considerably and it is estimated that the total lending will reach an all-time high of Rs. 305 crores during 1983-84. The programmes of the Harijan and Girijan Co-operative Federation are expected to provide employment opportunities to 25,000 persons next year.

Irrigation will receive top priority in our planning. All efforts will be made to remove the bottle necks of the works relating to the Kallada Irrigation Project and to keep the project going. It is expected that with the partial storage in the Idamalayar Hydro-Electric Project from the next monsoon there will be considerable relief to the salinity problem in Periyar. My Government also plan to irrigate additional areas in the Periyar Valley Project next year. Special steps will also be taken to intensify utilisation of ground water resources.

My Government will undertake detailed investigation for Noolpuzha and Aralam Irrigation Projects and bridge-cum-regulators at Chamravattom and Thrithala. Detailed investigation for Irrigation Projects in Chaliyar basin at Marutha, Chalipuzha and Punnapuzha and investigation for the second stage of Kanjira-puzha viz., Thuppanad are also planned.

Anti sea Erosion and flood control works will continue to be implemented vigorously.

Failure of three consecutive monsoons has resulted in my Government having to impose power cuts and yet my Government is trying to minimise the effect of power cut by limiting it to extra high tension and high tension consumers. This underlines the need for taking up more hydro-electric projects to meet the full requirements of the State in the future. My Government are hopeful that the sanction of the Planning Commission for the Lower Periyar Hydro-Electric Project will be received shortly and that there would be a favourable response of the Centre in clearing other projects already proposed by us. There is need for strengthening the transmission and distribution system of the State and effort is being taken in this regard. Rural electrification, with emphasis on electrification of Harijan and Tribal colonies, is receiving our priority attention. 329 Harijan and Tribal colonies are targeted for electrification during this year against 1056 during the last five years.

Under the Command Area Development programme, 74 new schemes for extension of field channels in command area are in the process of finalisation.

My Government are committed to providing a fresh momentum to the industrial sector. My Government's industrial policy already announced aims at securing a congenial climate for the accelerated growth of our industries. While seeking to consolidate and develop public sector units in which heavy investments have been made, my Government will motivate and encourage the private and joint sectors for increased investments. Based on the findings of the survey already under way to identify atleast one large or medium unit in each Taluk, action will be taken to promote industrial units in the private sector and the joint sector. My Government have also taken urgent steps for the rehabilitation of sick units by adopting a more liberalised approach in getting financial assistance. Emphasis will be laid on the optimum development of small scale industrial sector. Intending entrepreneurs will be given training and financial assistance to set up industries. It will be my Government's endeavour to rehabilitate traditional industries such as coir, cashew, beedi and handloom through protective and promotional steps. My Government have moved the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development to substantially increase the cash credit accommodation to the Primary and Apex Handloom Weaver's Co-operative Societies and we expect a favourable response. To relieve our industry of the dependence on the fluctuating international market, marketing within the country will be promoted with vigour.

We have taken up with the Government of India the scheme for rebate on coir yarn. I have pleasure to inform the House that we have already been successful in persuading the Government of India to agree to the scheme for rebate on the sale of coir products throughout the year.

Unprecedented and sudden fall in the price of cashew in the international market and also loss of market in a major consuming country have struck a terrible blow to the cashew industry in the State. My Government have, therefore, taken some realistic and bold measures to tide over the adverse situation with a view to helping the growers and workers. In this context my Government have fixed the floor price for raw cashew nuts and allowed the cultivators to sell their nuts beyond the floor price when offered. At the same time Government have also adopted necessary measures to make the nuts available within Kerala in order to retain the industry within the State itself.

My Government continue to attach great importance to the development of electronics industry in the State and will be setting up new industries through the Kerala State Electronics Development Corporation Limited.

The need to have greater coverage of national highways has been felt for long and my Government will try to prevail upon the Government of India to declare the Madurai-Muvattupuzha-Trivandrum and Calicut-Bangalore roads as national highways. Development of village roads will also continue to receive priority attention and the Public Works Department will take over about 350 kms. of rural roads next year.

The working of the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation will be toned up. A package of measures will be implemented to improve its efficiency and reduce losses. The major thrust will be on the replacement of its ageing fleet of buses by purchasing as many new buses as possible.

A comprehensive master plan will be worked out for the development of inland water transport sector. Steps will be taken to deepen and widen the channels for efficient navigation and modern vessels will be acquired for improving the passenger as well as cargo services.

The State has considerable potential for the development of tourism and imaginative schemes will be introduced to tap these in the optimum measure.

In the sphere of education, earnest efforts are being made to improve the quality of education and to further this aim steps are being taken to give a new meaning and purpose to the curriculum and syllabus at the school stage from 1984-85. My Government are also keen that our children should imbibe in true spirit our cultural heritage, traditions and knowledge which seek to impart lasting values in the minds of men and towards this end will try to introduce in the schools appropriate special studies. Proper attention will continue to be given to vocationalisation of higher secondary education and work experience programmes. My Government will take effective measures for the maintenance of academic peace and campus discipline and to reform the examination system.

My Government are convinced that the university administration needs toning up and accordingly necessary amendments will be made in the existing university Acts and efforts will be made to unify them. In the context of the prevailing unemployment situation it is essential that greater emphasis is laid on technical education. My Government, therefore, will adopt a new approach for opening polytechnics and lay emphasis on strengthening and improving the existing ITIs, ITCs, Junior Technical Schools and Polytechnics. Necessary legislation will be brought forward to provide more autonomy to the libraries affiliated to the Kerala Grandha Sala Sangham.

In the field of art and culture my Government are keen that the innate talents of our people are developed and for this purpose will continue a policy of encouraging the various forms of vernacular arts. The Onam celebrations throughout the State have helped rejuvenate our folk and traditional arts. The Lalitha Kala Academy will be reconstituted. The question of encouraging studies in classical languages, particularly Sanskrit, will receive sympathetic attention. Steps will also be taken to encourage local artists in the field of fine arts by recognising talent in a suitable manner by the State.

My Government are committed to providing adequate health care facilities to the people, especially in the rural areas. The new 20-point Programme will continue to be the nucleus of all our activities in this field. We propose to implement the family planning measures with active people's participation. The multi-purpose health workers' scheme will be introduced throughout the State as the basic pattern of rural health service. To bring the people directly in the area of hospital administration my Government have set up hospital development committees and their functioning will be qualitatively improved. In order to effectively prevent epidemic and infectious diseases efforts will be taken to streamline the special cells set up for this purpose. Preliminary work will be started on the World Bank aided "Indian Population Project III". Concerted efforts will be made to improve the standard of medical education in the State.

For the strict and effective enforcement of Abkari laws, the enforcement machinery will be sufficiently strengthened with the addition of more staff and vehicles. To detect adulteration of liquor, mobile laboratories will be commissioned. Necessary amendments to the Abkari Laws to make the punishment more deterrent will also be brought forward.

My Government realise the need to improve the financial viability of the Panchayats so as to equip them adequately to discharge their developmental roles meaningfully. A Panchayat Finance Commission will be set up for this purpose.

In order to enable the urban and local bodies to function effectively, my Government have increased their general purpose grant based on the recommendations of the Municipal Finance Commission. In keeping with the philosophy of the Sixth Plan and the new 20-point Programme my Government will vigorously continue schemes for slum clearance and slum improvement. Steps will be taken to get more towns included under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme for the integrated development of small and medium towns. The working of the urban development authorities in the State will be reviewed and improved.

Provision of protected drinking water to the rural areas will continue to engage the active attention of the Government. Under the new 20-point Programme my Government propose to provide drinking water to 200 new problem villages. My Government will set up an autonomous Water Supply and Sewerage Board for implementation and management of water supply and sanitation schemes in urban and rural areas.

In the housing sector, there will be increased emphasis on the provision of house sites and houses to the poor. Attempts will continue to secure larger funds from financing institutions. The rental housing schemes will continue to receive particular attention in the coming year also. Low cost housing scheme will receive a fillip. The introduction of new schemes such as subsidised aided-self-help scheme for economically weaker sections is under consideration.

My Government attach the greatest importance to the maintenance of industrial peace through the various instruments of negotiation, conciliation and adjudication and can modestly claim success in this field. Fullest attention will also be paid to promote labour welfare by constituting a fund for the welfare of the Motor Transport Workers and for Cinema and Beedi Workers.

To mitigate the economic dependence of women and to engage them in profitable avocations my Government propose to introduce a new scheme for training and apprenticeship for women. In view of the difficulties experienced by the working women, more working women's hostels will be opened. My Government will continue to provide assistance for the care and protection of orphan and destitute children and disabled and handicapped persons.

My Government are fully conscious of the problems and expectations of the Keralities working overseas and will strive to implement realistic programmes to suit their requirements and to channelise their resources for the productive purposes.

With a view to solving the unemployment problem in the State, my Government will launch an ambitious programme of providing 1 million jobs over a period of five years.

Under the aegis of the Khadi and Village Industries Board Employment opportunities will be provided to 10,000 harijans and girijans before the coming Gandhi Jayanti Day.

My Government view with legitimate pride the creditable performance of our sportsmen and women in the various national and international sports events, especially at the IX Asian Games, and extend our congratulations to the participants who brought laurels to themselves and honour to the State. My Government will continue our tradition of promoting sports, and with a view to discovering and encouraging latent talents, a Sports Complex will soon be set up in the State with all modern facilities and equipment.

Honourable Members, I have briefly indicated the general directions in which my Government intend to proceed. The tasks ahead are of such magnitude that they can be accomplished only with the active support, participation and involvement of all segments of the people. It is my earnest hope that all of us will work together in a spirit of co-operation and unity throwing aside all sectarian considerations, keeping the welfare of our State in perspective.

In this context my Government would like to assure that they would continue their practice of taking the Opposition into confidence in vital matters of State.

My Government are fully conscious of the commitments they have given to the people and would like to re-affirm their commitment to strive for a qualitatively better life for our people.

I wish you all success in your endeavour.

JAI HIND