

JUNE 25, 1982

Honourable Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly.

I am very happy to welcome you all to the First Session of the Seventh Kerala Legislative Assembly. This is the sixth consecutive occasion on which I have been privileged to address you. Many of you are new entrants to the Legislative Assembly and I would like to express a word of special welcome to you. Let me convey my very best wishes to you all and through you to the people of Kerala.

2. Since I last addressed you there has been a mid-term poll in this State and a new Ministry has assumed office. The United Democratic Front has been returned to power with a substantial majority. The massive mandate it received from the electorate can be considered only as an unquestionable expression of public opinion in favour of political stability, administrative efficiency, effective maintenance of law and order, and honesty and integrity in public life. The enlightened voters of Kerala have condemned in unmistakable terms chaos and anarchy in social life, misuse of the administrative apparatus and government finances to gain narrow political ends and an irrational and misguided policy of confrontation with the Union Government. It has firmly set its face against unethical practices in political life and voted in favour of the best traditions and practices of democratic Government. The mid-term poll has vindicated the highest values in personal and political life, practised and cherished by the founding fathers of our nation.

3. This Government is in effect a continuation of the Ministry that went out office last March, and therefore the policies and programmes that it would be pursuing would naturally be much the same as those outlined in my address to the Assembly in January last. By way of recapitulation, I may briefly state that the highest priority will be accorded to the maintenance of law and order, and streamlining the administrative apparatus so that the fruits of planned economic development are made available in full measure to the weaker section of the community, particularly Harijans and tribals. Simultaneously, earnest efforts will be made to augment the State's resources base through re-structuring and optimising the efficiency of public sector undertakings, intensifying the drive for collection of revenue arrears, minimising non-developmental expenditure and through other administrative measures.

4. I shall now briefly touch upon the highlights of my previous address and also the programmes additionally proposed to be taken up by the present Government

5. My Government is happy to recognise that the New Twenty Point Programme and the concept of the Productivity Year announced by the Prime Minister are relevant focal points for invigorating our country's economy. My Government is committed to the pursuit of the targets identified under them. My Government will identify the areas of priority and strive for overall growth of the economy, greater productivity, higher employment generation, infrastructural development and meaningful social services with due emphasis on social justice and security of life and property.

6. Our Sixth Five Year Plan having an overall outlay of Rs. 1,550 crores has now entered the third year of its implementation. The outlay for this year had been fixed at Rs. 275 crores as a higher outlay was not possible due to the critical financial situation that was faced. My Government has been in touch with Government of India and is hopeful that we would be helped to tide over the present difficult financial situation

7. In this context I must emphasise that my Government will follow a policy of constructive co-operation with the Central Government. During the short span of my previous Government, this policy had paid rich dividends for the State. To mention only a few notable instances, a Naval Academy at Ezhimala, a Caprolactum Plant and an Oceanographic Laboratory have been sanctioned at Cochin and the extension of the Cochin- Alleppey railway line upto Kayamkulam has been accepted in principle. The Calicut Airport, which has been the dream of Kerala for an exasperatingly long time, has finally come true and the foundation stone for its construction has already been laid. All these richly vindicate my Government's policy of understanding and co-operation with the Government of India. My present Government will pursue with vigour its efforts to attract more investment from Central Government in the interest of this State's development.

8. My Government will not lose sight of its commitment to the rural and urban poor including Scheduled Castes and Tribes. Adopting the national objective of enabling 50% of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to cross the poverty line during the sixth Plan period, special programmes and a proportionate share of various sectoral programmes are earmarked and enshrined in the Special Component Plan for Scheduled Castes and Sub Plan for Scheduled Tribes. The district wise perspective Plans for the development of Scheduled Castes are expected to be ready in a few months. My Government will give utmost priority to their implementation. The administrative machinery will be revamped and effective monitoring will be undertaken. The delivery system will be equipped to undertake the task. Time-bound programmes will be undertaken to ensure adequate representation of Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes in Government service, in public sector undertakings and in co-operative institutions. Identifying areas of employment possibilities, Harijans and Girijans will be specially trained to occupy them. Provision of housing, power and water to supply to will also receive adequate attention from my Government.

9. Though the chief concern of my Government will be the overall growth of the economy and the betterment of the lot of the underprivileged and the deprived, the importance of maintaining law and order and the proper functioning of agencies like the Police will never be lost sight of. My Government is committed to the concept that every citizen's home is his castle, that anti-social elements should be curbed and freedom to pursue one's avocations in peace should be maintained. The Police force of the State will be made to function as an instrument for the furtherance of justice and for serving the people without considerations of fear or favour.

10. My Government will take vigorous steps to maintain an effective public distribution system extending the services in a greater measure to urban and rural areas. Mobile stores distributing essential commodities will be set up for the benefit of remote rural areas.

11. My Government will pursue further action for the reorganisation of the existing units of revenue administration taking into account geographic and demographic features and administrative convenience.

12. Aiming at the rapid and integrated development of our villages, my Government proposes to take up the Gramotsava Programme in select panchayats, bringing together the Governmental functionaries, the public and voluntary institutions and pooling together their resources and energies for concerted developmental effort.

13. My Government will also take steps to consolidate and complete the activities under the KLR Act. Steps have been taken to issue Pattayam in all eligible cases most expeditiously.

14. Aware of the pivotal role played by agriculture in Kerala's economy, my Government will pursue a vigorous action-oriented policy for overall agricultural development, with emphasis on greater productivity and remunerative prices to farmers. Increase in the production of crops like coconut, sugarcane, rubber, tea, coffee, cashew nut and the various spices will be sought to be achieved through effective extension measures and support services. My Government will also strive to stabilise the prices of agricultural commodities and earn crops. For making agriculture cost effective and to bring relief to the farmers currently labouring under various constraints, steps will be taken to provide irrigation facilities for all crops through an intensive exploitation of ground water resources, soil conservation and improvement services, a helpful agricultural credit distribution system, coverage of crop insurance and support price and an effective extension system based on applied agricultural research. To safeguard the interests of farmers in respect of the prices for agricultural produce, regulated markets will be established and whole marketing structure of the State will be reorganised. The activities in the field of Animal Husbandry and Dairy will be geared to help the small and marginal farmer in raising his income.

15. Suitable measures will be devised and implemented for the welfare of agricultural labour. The Agricultural Workers Pension Scheme will continue to be implemented and it will be ensured that all the deserving will receive the benefits.

16. In the Co-operative Sector, the thrust will be on the stepping up of all forms of agricultural credit marketing facilities, supply of agricultural inputs, distribution of consumer goods and assistance for housing. Special attention will be given to Harijans and Girijans for ensuring adequate representation in the administration of co-operatives as well as in the recruitment of staff.

17. My Government's approach in the field of Fisheries will be oriented towards the intensive exploitation of marine and inland fish wealth and the welfare of the traditional fishermen. The institutions designed to help the fishermen will be revamped. The supply of modern tools and equipments, assignment of poramboke lands in coastal areas, supply of drinking water and electricity in fishermen concentrations, insurance scheme and measures for ensuring adequate facilities for marketing are some of the measures proposed by my Government for the welfare of the fishermen.

18. The activities of the Community Development Department will be streamlined for achieving the overall development of the rural poor. The Integrated Rural Development Programme and the National Rural Employment Programme will be implemented with greater vigour and orientation towards the needs of weaker sections with particular emphasis on Scheduled Castes and Tribes. For mobilising institutional finance in time, credit camps will be conducted. The creation of durable rural assets conducive to development will be the prime consideration under the latter scheme.

19. Due emphasis will be given to social Forestry and the protection and consolidation of our forests. For this purpose, fixation of boundaries after survey will be undertaken. Encroachment, smuggling and poaching will be curbed and the machinery for this will be suitably strengthened.

20. My Government will devote its energies for the rapid industrialisation of the State. For this, my Government will endeavour to create a suitable industrial climate which will attract more and more investment. My Government will press for the establishment of large scale industries in the Central sector in our State. Determined and imaginative steps will be taken to improve the efficiency and productivity of public sector undertakings and to revive sick units. All round growth in the small scale sector will be pursued through promotion and encouragement of skills and entrepreneurship and positive support to them through supply of raw material, centralised marketing facilities, quality control and various forms of incentives. Electricity connection on liberal terms to new industries will be given on a priority basis. Our

traditional industries such as coir, handloom, cashew, beedi and match industries require help to get out of their difficulties and my Government will make efforts for their continued growth and vigour. My Government will take maximum help from the recently constituted National Handloom Development Corporation for stabilising the handloom industry in the State. An imaginative programme for discovering and nurturing the entrepreneurial talent latent in the people of the State will be launched in the days to come.

21. My Government will strive to protect the legitimate interests of the workers and to take care of their welfare requirements. But unwarranted dislocation of production and disruption of industrial peace will not be tolerated. A climate conducive to greater industrial growth and productivity will be the objective of my Government in the labour front and every effort will be made to create harmony in the relationship between labour and management. The energetic steps taken by my Government in this regard has already helped in reopening a number of industrial establishments which were closed for a considerable time.

22. My Government proposes to bring out an Industrial Policy Statement clearly defining the policy of the Government with a view to removing the apprehensions and doubts of the investors and entrepreneurs.

23. In the sphere of education, my Government will pursue the objective of academic peace, quality improvement, skill upgradation, vocationalisation, entrepreneur development, talent cultivation and administrative efficiency. To this end, the involvement and co-operation of all sections of the society will be sought through public dialogues and time bound programmes. Pre-primary education will receive the priority attention of my Government and steps will be taken to unify the curriculum, to co-ordinate the efforts of various agencies in the field and to upgrade the skills of the teachers. By giving maximum encouragement to scientific and technical education, applied research and professional skills, the young men and women of the State will be equipped to seek better employment in the job market.

24. My Government will take firm and imaginative steps to improve the image of our universities and to devise a fool-proof examination system. The improvement in the efficiency and discipline of our schools and colleges and the improvement in academic peace will be pursued relentlessly. The development of youth and the problems of students will receive the prompt attention of my Government.

25. Steps will be taken to impart a new meaning and content to the Health Care Delivery System by making necessary changes in the existing pattern. The coverage of health care facilities will be extended to all the villages. New centres will be opened for specialised treatments. All systems of medicine will receive the helpful attention of my Government. Medical education which has received a long awaited boost with the opening of the Trichur Medical College will receive further attention in the form of added facilities in the institutions and quality improvement programmes. The Pai Committee report prescribing health care facilities will be implemented.

26. Our major and medium irrigation projects and hydro-electric projects have been facing problems in respect of timely completion. Energetic steps will be taken to complete the projects as scheduled and to realise their optimum utilisation. In the case of the Kallada Irrigation Project, the negotiations with the World Bank are over and the formal agreement is expected to be signed shortly. This will help completion of this long-pending project. In the Power Sector, apart from generation, special priority will be accorded to transmission and distribution. It will also be the endeavour of my Government to get new projects cleared in the course of the year.

27. My Government will vigorously pursue the objective to provide protected drinking water to all the villages in the State during this decade itself. Attempts to obtain external assistance for this purpose have already been successful and further attempts will continue in the days to come.

28. In the field of Housing, while attempts will be made to consolidate the gains and to make a few fresh starts, the accent will fall on the Rental Housing schemes for Government employees and the housing schemes for the rural poor. A phased and time-bound programme will be undertaken to provide house sites to the landless in the rural areas and sites and services in the urban areas. Low cost housing will receive special attention and the manufacture of pre-fabricated housing materials with the assistance of HUDCO is proposed to be taken up.

29. Under Urban Development and Town Planning, the development of district headquarters and small towns will receive priority attention. A Development Authorities for Palghat will also be created in the course of the year.

30. Under Social Welfare, the Welfare of the children, women, the handicapped and the aged will be the overriding priorities.

31. The supply of adequate transport facilities by streamlining the transportation services in the State will be undertaken vigorously. Action will also be pursued to develop our road net work and for obtaining a greater coverage of national highways in the State.

32. Development of Tourism is a special significance to the State and the policy of my Government on this front will be an integrated one aiming at the creation of all infrastructural requirements and supporting services so as to further exploit Kerala's potential in attracting tourists.

33. For nurturing sportsmanship and sportsmen, my Government will create and strengthen sports institutions and infrastructural facilities and provide incentives and coaching facilities in the greater measure. Steps will also be taken to retain the outstanding sportsmen within the State once they leave the schools and colleges.

34. My Government is aware of the need to strengthen the Police force in the State and to improve their working and living conditions. Police Welfare, including housing accident risk cover, insurance benefits and betterment of the service conditions will receive the prompt attention of my Government.

35. My Government is committed to protect the interests of the religious and linguistic minorities. The reservation system currently prevailing will continue. At the same time, steps will also be taken to extend the help of the Government to the poor. The problems of other backward communities who are not covered by reservation principles will also be studied and necessary action will be taken to redress their grievances.

36. For the mobilisation of the financial resources of the State from our main sources like Sales tax, Agricultural Income-tax, Excise etc., my Government will not tolerate any half-heartedness or leniency and will strive for optimum revenue collection and strict enforcement of the rules.

37. Honourable Members. I have presented before you the salient features of my Government's policies and action programmes for the year. Let me reiterate that my Government will devote all its energies for the economic growth of the State and its people and for ensuring a peaceful life to the citizens, enlisting the co-operation of all, irrespective of politics, caste or creed. I would request you all to extend your whole-hearted co-operation to my Government in the interest of the State and the people whom you represent.

Let me wish you all success in your endeavour.

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