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**MARCH 28, 1987**

*Honourable Members of the Legislative Assembly,*

I am very happy to extend to everyone of you, my sincere greetings and congratulations on your election as Members of the Eighth Kerala Legislative Assembly. I have great pleasure in welcoming you all to your First Session.

2. As the Government has assumed office only two days ago, it has not had time to spell out in detail its policies and programmes and to finalise the budget for the coming financial year. I shall, however, indicate briefly the policies and programmes that my Government intends to adopt and implement. A provisional budget for 1987-88 will be presented to you during this short session and a vote-on-account to carry on the business of Government during the next four months will be sought. The final Supplementary Grants for 1986-87 will also be presented. The Government's policies and programmes will be explained in detail along with the detailed budget proposals to be presented in April/May.

3. Through the general elections that are just over, the people of the State have rejected the politics of convenience based on religion and caste and of appeasement of communal forces. The people have also expressed their resentment against the cancerous spread of corruption in Government and society. They have voted decisively for politics based on principles and for secularism, democracy and national unity. They have voted for cleanliness and honesty in Government and in public life. My Government acknowledges with gratitude and with all humility the confidence that has been placed on it by the people of the State. It dedicates itself to provide an honest, progressive and efficient Government concentrating on developmental activities. My Government seeks your whole hearted co-operation in this noble task.

4. The present Government is assuming office at a time when the Left Front has scored magnificent victories in West Bengal which has always remained a combination of secular and democratic forces. Now that Kerala too has thrown up a ruling combination in which caste and communal forces have no place, I hope all-India politics also will move in a clearer and more healthy direction.

5. It is a matter of deep regret that immediately after the poll on the 23rd of this month, there were violent incidents in various places involving loss of life. The Government will take stringent action against those responsible for these incidents. My Government also wish to make it clear that it will do everything in its power to maintain Law and Order. It will take steps to improve the efficiency of the Police and maintain Law and Order with the full co-operation of the people.

6. My Government will protect the legitimate rights and interests of all minorities both religious and linguistic.

7. It is most unfortunate that elections to local bodies have not been held for a number of years now. This has deprived the people of the benefit of being administered by elected bodies. The administration by the bureaucracy has resulted in the stagnation of all developmental activities of the local bodies. Elections to Panchayats, Municipalities and Municipal Corporations will be held within the next few months and the time-table for the same will be announced shortly. In view of the delay in holding elections to the local bodies, it has become inevitable to extend the present arrangements for some time more and for this purpose, two bills will be introduced in this session. Steps will be taken to implement the District Administration Act. My Government will give emphasis to rural Planning and Development and generation of employment through considerably widened rural development programmes, including Food-for-work programmes.

8. The State is facing an acute drought situation and there is scarcity of even drinking water in many areas. During the next two months before the onset of monsoons, highest priority will be given to the supply of drinking water. Agricultural crops have also been badly affected in several parts of the State. Drought relief measures will be undertaken on a large scale in all affected parts. My Government urge the Government of India to come forward with generous assistance to meet the unprecedented drought situation. The State Government will give particular attention to long term measures of protection of environment and forests and for the conservation of water resources, so that the State can better cope with years of poor rain/fall. The Government will deal severely with those who try to destroy forests and tree growth.

9. The prices of all consumption articles have gone up as a result of which the common man's life has become miserable. The price situation in the State is dependent entirely on the fiscal and monetary policies of the Government of India. Within these constraints, however, the State Government will do everything in its power to ensure that prices are maintained. The efficiency of the public distribution system will be improved and its scope widened. As soon as the Consumer Protection Act is brought into effect by the Central Government, the State Government will take immediate steps to form Councils at the State and District levels as well as other statutory agencies. No efforts will be spared to protect the interests of consumers.

10. The gravest problem facing the State is the unemployment of its youth. My Government will give highest priority to the solution of this problem. It will increase employment opportunities vastly by going in for massive investment in productive sectors. The solution to the acute problem of unemployment can be found only by direct investment by State and Central Governments as well as by catalysing investments in productive areas by co-operatives and by small and medium scale entrepreneurs. The various programmes of assistance for such investment will be simplified and rationalised and proper utilisation will be ensured. The sharp increase in investment that is necessary will be made both by avoiding wasteful expenditure and effecting economies within the State and by getting increased Central help. A mid-term review of the State's Seventh Five Year Plan will be conducted quickly and the changes necessary in the direction of development will be brought about.

11. The Government proposes to mobilise and utilize the services of youth in the State by actively associating them in development programmes. My Government will draw up a Scheme in this regard and seek Central Government's assistance.

12. Special programmes will be implemented for the reorganization and revitalisation of traditional industries like Coir, Cashew, Handloom etc, and for the establishment of new industries and creation of employment opportunities in the areas in which people dependent on traditional industries live. Steps will also be taken to get the closed factories re-opened.

13. The Government will press for larger Central investment in the State in industry and infrastructure including development of power. My Government trust that the Government of India will extend its co-operation and assistance for the speedy development of the State and for finding solutions to its major economic problems. On its part, the State Government will co-operate fully with the Central Government in terms of the Constitution and in preserving the national unity and integrity.

14. An action plan for the revitalisation and diversification of the State's public undertakings which have not been performing well, will be drawn up and implemented. My Government cannot but note in this context that the working of many of the State and co-operative enterprises are in a bad way primarily due to deficiencies in management. It dissociates itself from the view that the present sad state of affairs is the consequence of the "selfish" workers and employees. No improvement in the working of the enterprises can be brought about without the full co-operation of the workers and employees for which a change in the attitude of the managements is the essential pre-requisite. Having brought this about, it is, of course necessary to create a new sense of responsibility on the part of workers and employees. My Government will use its influence in both directions. It will take steps to improve the managerial efficiency. The financial, economic and social objectives to be achieved by each undertaking will be clearly laid down so that there is no ambiguity in objectives and consequent alibi for poor performance. The State Government's public enterprises will be turned into major instruments of growth and employment from their present position of being a burden on the State's finances.

15. My Government recognises the important role of Science and Technology in the development of the State. Government will fully support the Science and Technology Institutions in their work. While the Government would welcome the introduction of technological improvements in all areas, it will ensure that the technologies are relevant to our situation and that their introduction leads to further generation of employment and not reduction.

16. Private agencies and institutions have contributed significantly to the growth of educational institutions in the State. Unfortunately, certain negative trends have developed in recent years and they have had a debilitating influence on education in the State and on our youth. The policies pursued in the:

field of education have created a state of anarchy and confusion. The present position in the educational field is disastrous so far as the student community and future generations are concerned. My Government will take early and necessary steps to mend the situation that has developed in this field, to improve the quality of education and to mould a well-motivated, forward-looking and dedicated younger generation.

17. I had earlier referred to the cancerous growth of corruption in the State. Stringent action will be taken against those in public service and public life who indulge in corruption. The institutional arrangements for dealing with corruption amongst those holding public offices will be improved. The provisions in the present law relating to prevention of corruption of Public Men are inadequate to meet the purposes for which the law is enacted. The Commission has also made recommendations in the matter of amendment of the law. No action has been taken so far on these recommendations. My Government will bring forth the necessary amendments to the Law Fighting corruption however is not a mere legal and administrative task. It cannot be effective unless it is evolved with the political mobilisation of trade unions employees' organisations, other mass organisations of various types including political parties. With the support of these organisations, my Government propose to create a public awareness that using one's position in and influence over the administration for one's own benefit or for the benefit of one's dear and near is an anti-social attitude which cannot be tolerated.

18. The principles of recruitment to public service including the reservation for the socially and educationally backward classes and for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are by now well-established. They will be continued by my Government.

19. My Government will fully protect the legitimate interests of labour. It will draw up and implement a code of conduct after discussions with the representatives of industry and labour. Industrial disputes will be resolved through mutual discussions.

20. Government will take steps to resolve the problems faced by Government and quasi-government employees. It will take steps to rationalise the various pensions including service pensions. It will be ensured that all pensions and welfare payments are made regularly and in time.

21. One of your important tasks is to frame laws to guide administration and development. There has been a slowing down of legislative work in the recent past and as many as fifty-two published Bills could not be taken up and enacted into law. In the best traditions of a democratic Government, my Government will bring the laws before you for your consideration and approval and will not take recourse to emergency provisions, except very rarely under wholly unavoidable circumstances.

22. Hon'ble Members, the people of the State have placed a heavy responsibility on you. I have no doubt in my mind that true to the excellent traditions of the Kerala Assembly, you will discharge your responsibilities to the people with sincerity and dedication, always governed by considerations of public interest. I wish you all every success in your endeavours.

JAI HIND