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ADDRESS
OF
THE GOVERNOR OF PUNJAB
SHRI BANWARILAL PUROHIT
TO THE
STATE LEGISLATURE
Monday 21ST March, 2022

Hon'ble Mr. Speaker and Respected Members,

I extend a warm and hearty welcome to the inaugural session of the 16th Punjab Vidhan Sabha and congratulate you all for your success in the general election.

2. At the very outset, I also wish to thank the people of Punjab for the remarkable clarity of vision displayed by them in the just concluded Assembly Elections in the State. It is a matter of great satisfaction that the electoral exercise was conducted in a free and fair manner. Credit for this goes to the people of Punjab, officers of the state administration and the Election Commission of India.
3. The people of Punjab have overwhelmingly voted for change and have given my government a historic mandate. This mandate is of hope and aspiration. The people of Punjab have reposed faith in not only a new approach to governance but also to a new political culture that stresses the need to place the citizen at the center of our thoughts, actions and policies. This is a truly momentous occasion as the people of the state have just scripted a new chapter in the history of democracy in the state and the country.
4. It is with great humility and profound hope that my government accepts the mandate given to it by the people of Punjab. It is a mandate that carries the dreams and

aspirations of the *aam aadmi* regardless of caste, class, gender or creed. There is one unifying, resounding message that the people have sent out. They want good governance that emerges out of clean politics and to achieve this they have shown their eagerness to engage with the political process. In an age of cynicism, people of Punjab came together to usher in Inquilab in the hope of a better day – in hope of re-establishing Rangla Punjab.

5. My government believes that Punjab can be defined in one word: Potential. My government will strive to ensure that every citizen of Punjab is given the opportunity to realize their dreams and potential. And to realize this potential - our potential - we must look ahead and march forward.

Forward to a Punjab, where everyone is treated with respect.

Forward to a Punjab, that creates jobs for everyone.

Forward to a Punjab, where people are partners in progress.

Forward to a Punjab, where our women are safe and sound.

Forward to a Punjab, where our farmers are happy and are respected.

Forward to a Punjab, which leads by example and is the No.1 state in the country.

Forward to a Punjab, where our future is rooted in our Punjabiya.

Forward to a Punjab, which is fearless and proud.

Forward to a Punjab, which fulfills the aspirations of its people.

Forward to a Punjab, which fulfills the dreams of Shaheed Bhagat Singh and Baba Ambedkar.

And this is my government's commitment to YOU, my fellow citizens. That my government will work with all my heart to realize YOUR dreams.

For this is what Punjab is all about: Its people.

My government believes that in democracy, people are the king (Janta Raj Mein Janta Hi Raja). And this is what my government will be all about.

6. My government intends to deepen and strengthen our democracy by partnering with people especially in issues that affect them on a daily basis. My government believes that good governance should reflect the concerns of all sections of society. Equally, development must include the well-being of every citizen. The goal of a safe and progressive Punjab cannot be achieved unless each and

every citizen feels safe to pursue their livelihood, their way of life and faith. It would be the endeavour of my government to deliver on all promises made to the people of Punjab and live up to the faith reposed in my government.

7. The past five years have seen a serious disconnect, between the people and the government. The rulers became inaccessible, not only to the common people but even to their representatives. They began to look at themselves as the 'masters' and the people as their servile subjects. This ran against the very concept of democracy, in which people alone are the masters and those in the government have to function as their conscientious servants. To my government, accessibility is the corner stone on which the edifice of its relationship of trust and mutual affection with the people rests. My government proposes not only to welcome every individual to its door, but also to reach out to them especially the poorest, in every nook and corner of the State.
8. A major area of concern to my government is the injection of bitterness, personal as well as political, into the affairs of the State. Character assassination, which has never been a component of Punjabi culture, became the norm. This

tendency was also at the root of the confrontationist politics that Punjab saw, during the past years. This could only have disastrous implications for the future of Punjab and its people, as it merely frittered away the creative energy that could flow from a constructive working together of the ruling and the opposition parties. The people of the State have clearly rebuffed this confrontationist tendency, by voting in favour of an agenda for good governance and development, based on a broad Punjabi consensus. My government truly honours this mandate and is determined to be guided by it. My government is committed to the rule of law and the law alone will deal any aberration. It calls for an all-party consensus, on some minimum standards of decorum and dignity, in the conduct of public figures.

9. The people of the State have firmly and repeatedly expressed themselves against corruption in society. The verdict in the just concluded elections was also a mandate against this menace. The problem is symptomatic, the true sources of which lie in a general, all round and pervasive decline in moral standards in our society. It calls for a massive social movement, spearheaded by the government and the opposition party, to wage a war on corruption. This war on corruption will be led by the people of Punjab.

10. My government will adopt a policy of Zero Tolerance towards corruption. On its part, my government will make a transparent and corruption-free administration the cardinal principle in its approach to governance. My government is committed to end all sorts of illegal syndicates in transport, liquor, sand mining in the State. These anti-social elements have looted Punjab in the past during the previous regimes and deprived the state exchequer of the funds to the tune of thousands of crores which could have been used for the welfare of the common people.
11. Health and education are bedrock of human and social development and empowerment. My government stands committed to all round improvements in these two vital sectors. Accordingly, policies will be evolved and implemented to strengthen and expand educational and health infrastructure.
12. Existing hospitals will be made world class and new hospitals will be developed on a large scale. My government will ensure every citizen has access to world-class and affordable health services. Every citizen of the state will get treatment completely free in government hospitals of the quality that private hospitals provide. Medicines will be provided at the hospital itself. It will be ensured that

machines in hospitals work at full capacity.

13. Every citizen of the state will be issued a health card on which all information will be completely digital. Further, 16000 *pind* and ward clinics will be established all over the State on the lines of 'Mohalla Clinics' in Delhi.
14. My government will make sure that anyone who suffers from a road accident can be saved. For this, a scheme on the pattern of 'Farishtey' scheme in Delhi will be launched in the state under which anyone can take a road accident victim and get them admitted to any hospital and they will be given free treatment. It does not matter how expensive the hospital is or how expensive the treatment is, each citizen will be given free treatment and their lives will be saved.
15. My government believes that quality education is essential for nation building. My Government will work towards a complete transformation of the education sector. On the lines of Delhi, my government will strive to ensure that the education imparted at government schools is even better than private schools. We will ensure that the fees of schools are regulated to ease the burden on the common people.
16. My Government is committed for creating conducive environment in the education sector in Punjab. Most of

the teachers in Punjab have been working for only Rs. 10,000 per month from the last 18 years; which was unfair. Teachers used to be assigned non-teaching tasks. There have been huge vacancies of the post of the teachers and for the existing available teachers, there has not been any training for modern teaching methods.

17. My Government will make permanent recruitment on existing vacant posts and will formulate a policy for regularizing the jobs of existing outsourced and contractual teachers. To have an impact on the quality of teaching, teachers will be sent abroad for training in modern teaching methods in Finland, Canada, USA and England, along with the management institutes of the country. Teachers will not be assigned any non-teaching work so that they are able to concentrate upon the teaching of the students which will further lead to an impact on the quality of education in the state.
18. My government will formulate a transparent transfer policy to mitigate the sufferings of the teachers. There will be a policy for promotion of the teachers. Cashless medical facility for teachers and their family members will be put in place for their welfare.
19. Electricity is a very big issue in Punjab and the situation is

very bad. Despite being a power surplus state, the electricity tariffs in Punjab are the highest in India because there was a nexus between the private power plants and those in power. My government is committed to provide relief to the people and exchequer of Punjab from this nexus.

20. Even though the previous Government had resorted to false propaganda of cheaper power in Punjab as compared to the rest of the Country and the false claim of waiver of all domestic bill arrears or unpaid bills but nothing has happened in reality. My government is committed to give 300 units free electricity to each household in Punjab with which about 80% households will get zero power bill. Domestic electricity connections which were disconnected due to non-payment of the power bill/arrears will be restored.
21. My government is committed to ensure round-the-clock power supply in Punjab. However, since infrastructure upgradation will be required for 24-hour power supply, it would take some time for implementation. It would take about two to three years to provide 24-hour power supply. Needless to say that all existing electricity schemes, including free power for farmers and the present rate of tariff for industries will continue.

22. My government is committed to address the issues of the farmers on priority so that their problems are mitigated. The Annadata cannot feel helpless. My government will make agriculture a profession of dignity and make it profitable. Farmers who were affected by natural causes during this year would not only be provided compensation but the same would be enhanced in proportion to the production cost. Crop loss compensation will be credited to the account of each affected farmer and labourer by 30th April.
23. A special plan to make agriculture and animal husbandry profitable would be unveiled shortly. Paddy stubble would be used for power, cardboard and agro-based industries which would provide employment to the youth of Punjab making agriculture profitable. Special efforts would be made to facilitate the women agriculturalists of Punjab. My government will promote seed production so that Punjab becomes a seed-hub. Crop diversification and increase in area under Basmati, cotton, mustard, maize and oilseed shall be undertaken so that the groundwater can also be saved.
24. Even though the previous governments claim to have distributed Soil Health Cards (SHCs) to the farmers but the

ground reality is completely different. My government will ensure that each and every farmer gets SHC of his/her field so that he/she may use the fertilizers etc. accordingly. This will lead to reduction in their expenditure on agriculture and will add to their income. My government will strengthen the existing soil testing labs and will setup more labs at the block level so that all the farmers are able to avail the benefits of these labs.

25. My government will revamp the block offices of the agriculture department so that information about schemes of the government percolates to each and every household in the villages and people may avail benefits of those schemes.
26. My government will lay special emphasis on veterinary services, research on genetic improvement of animal breeds, taking up of shrimp farming and quality fish seed in Punjab. Commercialisation and mechanization of Dairy sector will be promoted. Cooperatives will be encouraged with assistance for value addition, marketing, branding and sale of products. The menace of adulteration of milk and milk products will be effectively combatted.
27. Punjab is the land of martyrs and heroes who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the defence of the motherland.

My government salutes the patriotic and brave soldiers of the state who have always led from the front. My government is committed to provide relief/honorarium of Rs. 1 Crore to the families of the martyred jawans of Punjab.

28. My government is committed to the upliftment of the Scheduled Caste community in the State. My government will provide free education to the students, free foreign education for college students, free medical service and free coaching for competitive exams to the persons of the Scheduled Caste community of the state.
29. The previous governments have neglected the government medical colleges in the state. While there is only a slight increase in the number of seats of government colleges of Patiala, Amritsar and Faridkot, there has been little effort to establish medical colleges at District level. Further, there are only 675 seats of MBBS in the government colleges of Punjab and about 770 seats in half a dozen private medical colleges in Punjab where minimum charges ranging from Rs.50 lakh to Rs.80 lakh are being levied on the students for medical degrees. Students of poor and middle class can't afford these seats even with good ranks and students with wealthy families get these seats even at mediocre ranks. These aspiring students belonging to ordinary and middle

class families are compelled to go to countries like Ukraine. My government will take major steps to establish and reform government medical colleges, universities so that the students of Punjab would not be forced to study abroad.

30. Future of Punjab rests with its youth, and this occupies a unique place in my government's set of priorities. Every step will be taken to harness the youth force for the constructive regeneration of the State. Even though Jalandhar is a hub of sports industry but there is no institute for the training of the youth in sports there. My government will make the country's biggest Sports University at Jalandhar.
31. Lack of employment for the state youth is the major cause of drug addiction in the state and it is also a major cause of immigration to the foreign countries. It has been happening due to incompetency of the previous governments. Even though Congress had promised to give employment in every household of Punjab in the last elections of 2017 but nothing was done by the Congress government during the last five years. The lack of jobs within the State has forced an exodus of children who are looking for opportunities abroad.
32. My government will endeavor to reverse this trend by

providing ample employment and business opportunities in Punjab. Youth will not only be provided employment and salary according to their qualification but they will also be provided new opportunities for start-ups, so that they can create jobs too.

33. My government is committed for the welfare of the traders and businessmen of the state. We will create a conducive atmosphere so that trade and industry flourishes. Neither any new tax will be imposed nor any existing tax will be enhanced in the coming five years so that there is no frightening flight of any trade or business from the state. My government will ensure traders and industrialists are partners in Punjab's progress. My government will establish a special Commission comprising of only traders and businessmen as its members, who will make decisions and formulate policies. My government will provide a special impetus to the new industry, especially to MSMEs which form the backbone of Punjab's industrial sector. In order to improve the working conditions of Punjab's industries, we will urgently seek to restore the damaged infrastructure in our existing Industrial Focal Points. In order to promote industrial revival, un-utilised lands in under developed Industrial Estates and focal points shall be made available to the industry at competitive rates.

34. Immediate action will be taken by the Government if any elected representative or official asks for share from businessmen. Government will work closely with traders and new schemes will be formulated to promote business. A safe environment for business will be created by completely eliminating Inspector Raj, Raid Raj and Illegitimate tax. All previous fake FIRs against the traders will be scrapped. My government will also work closely with manufacturers and exporters to ensure that Punjab establishes itself prominently in the global map of production.
35. Punjab is among the states with the largest segment of NRIs. There is hardly a family in any village, town or city without one or more members residing abroad. The contribution of these NRIs is truly immense but is sometimes under-rated. My government proposes to put this segment high on its list of priorities. It has been a long outstanding demand of the NRIs belonging to Doaba region that there should be an airport for them in their periphery. My government is committed to make an International Airport for them in Jalandhar. Further, the Government shall also strengthen the grievance redressal mechanism for NRIs for their various issues.

36. Basic services are a right of the people and they cannot be mired in red tape. My government is committed to implement “Doorstep Delivery Services” system in the state so that people get freedom from middlemen-brokers and long queues in the government offices and service centers. Citizens will be able to avail services from the comfort of their homes. These would include the essential public services such as getting caste and marriage certificates, driving licence, ration card, new water connection/electricity connection etc. Further, my government will prepare a District Performance Dashboard which would ensure accountability for delays in giving services to the people.
37. My government shall be unwavering in its commitment for the empowerment of women in the State and will formulate a scheme for the empowerment of women which will be the biggest scheme ever for the empowerment of women in the whole world. This scheme will have a monumental effect on their upliftment.
38. Under this scheme, to start with, my government will provide Rs.1000 per month to every woman above 18 years of age while older women will get Rs. 1000 in addition to senior citizen pension. Financial literacy will be one of the pillars of the scheme. It will make them independent and

empower them. It will give them choice and clubbed with financial literacy it will promote savings, thrift and investment. It will enable dignity in fulfilling their small desires such as- older women in our society will be able to spend something for their daughter when she visits them, housewives will not have to often run behind their husbands to make them get something for their children, girls will not have to ask their fathers if they want to buy something from market for themselves etc.

39. The past few years have seen the State suffer from the twin menace of breakdown of law and order, and the collapse of rule of law. My government firmly believes that maintenance of peace and the protection of life and property of the citizens is the first moral and constitutional obligation of any government. While my government would ensure that the law enforcing agencies in the State maintain constant vigilance in this regard, in no case will they be allowed to trample on the rights and the dignity of the common citizen through the unjustified and blind use of force. Rule of Law will be established in letter and spirit. It is a bold effort to wed vision to reality and dreams to brass-tacks.

40 My government is committed to give an honest, scrupulous and stern government to the people of Punjab so that no

one dares to commit any crime in the State and there is a peaceful atmosphere. All cases of the bomb blast, sacrileges including Bargari sacrilege, operations of gangsters in the State etc. will be investigated thoroughly so that all the guilty including their masterminds are brought to book.

41. It will be ensured that there is corruption free recruitment of police officers, postings will be on merit and integrity and there is no interference of any elected representative or political leader in the working of the State police. VIP culture goes against the ethos of my government and my government has already taken steps to prevent any misuse of the police force by withdrawing any additional personal security which is against the norms. Police forces would be strengthened to tackle crimes and law and order situations to ensure that peace prevails in the State. Conditions of the working of the police force will also be ameliorated as my government is conscious of the fact that the police work under difficult circumstances often leading to stress and health issues. Steps will also be taken to ensure sensitization of the police force.
42. Borders of the State will be protected meticulously so that no terrorist may enter in the State and there is no smuggling of drugs from across the border. My government will ensure that the police forces are equipped with the latest and

best technology to avert and intercept any threats from across the border including that of drones being used for smuggling of narcotics and weapons from across the border.

43. My government will not let any fund crunch come in the way of putting in place safety and security measures for women's safety and to control crime. The entire State will be covered with CCTV network which will help to tackle the crime rate in the state.
44. No stone would be left unturned by my government to free the State of drug menace in six months. However, all previous fake FIRs against the innocent people will be scrapped and an element of fear will be removed from the minds of the people.
45. Employees form the backbone of any government and are the sole mechanism of delivery of services. The previous government treated this significant segment to royal neglect. My government is determined to undo this as it considers every employee a partner in its dream of a prosperous Punjab.
46. My government is committed for the welfare of the Anganwadi and ASHA workers. Their pay and incentive amounts will be doubled.

47. My government is committed to address the problems of the lawyers of the State. Chambers for them will be built in the court complexes. My government will provide insurance cover to them and their families.
48. My government is committed to end the transport mafia in the State and resolve all issues of the transport sector. A commission of 10 to 15 members will be constituted for the transport sector comprising representatives of the State's transport unions. The new transport policy will be formulated by the commission. Decisions of this commission will be implemented by the Government so that the problems faced by the people in this business, including truck operators, can be resolved from time to time.
49. There is a serious issue of cleanliness across the various cities of Punjab including Ludhiana, Bathinda, Amritsar and Jalandhar. Roads in the existing markets in the cities are in shambles and there is no facility of public toilets or proper parking in the markets. My government will provide best cleanliness facilities including proper sewage, drainage, solid waste management in the cities so that they look beautiful. Moreover, proper infrastructure including parking, public toilets and other facilities for the markets would be created by my government.

50. Punjab is the land of Gurus & Saints and even in Gurbani special importance has been given to environment. Guru Nanak Dev Ji, through his verse "Pawan Guru, Pani Pita, Mata Dharat Mehat" has given status of Guru to air, Father to water and Mother to Earth. Human well-being is strongly linked to environment. In the last few decades, human-inflicted stress on natural resources have lead to immense adverse impact on environment. My government will take innovative initiatives to improve the environment.
51. Special focus will be given by my government to improve water quality of our rivers. To achieve this, common effluent treatment plants will be setup for industrial sectors and sewage treatment plants for all cities & towns.
52. My government will also lay special emphasis on cleaning and improvement of village ponds which would also help in improving the water table through ground water recharge.
53. Concrete steps will be taken by my government to provide clean air to citizens of Punjab. Industries using polluting fossil fuels like coal, furnace oil etc. will be provided technical guidance for adopting natural gas & other cleaner fuels and requisite policy level efforts will be made for the same.

54. To tackle the issue of paddy straw burning in fields, my government will demonstrate and promote technology-based solutions like use of paddy straw for electricity generation & as industrial fuel etc.
55. To reduce pollution from transport sector, new technological interventions like electric vehicles, CNG operated vehicles, etc. will be promoted. The basic infrastructure for air quality monitoring would also be strengthened.
56. My government has assumed charge at a time when the State is in the grip of a severe economic crisis and the loans incurred by the previous government over run the State's total plan expenditure. The magnitude of unemployment has reached frightening proportions and continues to increase. Price rise has broken the back of the common man, especially the poor. This economic crisis is the result of skewed priorities as well as neglect. There have been serious distortions in the previous governments' approach to fiscal management putting the State on a downward slide. These concerns have to be addressed as a top priority, and my government proposes to start the process right away.
57. The financial situation of the State has been under stress for the past few years, mainly on account of mis-match

between receipts and expenditure. The persistence of large fiscal deficit over the years has led to accumulation of staggering debt which is reaching Rs.3.5 lac crores now. The State is classified as debt-stressed State as per Government of India norms. As per the Reserve Bank of India's State Finances Report 2021-22, Punjab's debt-Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) ratio is 42.5% - the highest after Jammu and Kashmir, Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland. This clearly puts Punjab as the most indebted big State in India.

58. The mounting debt burden is a cause of great worry and my government will make all out efforts to remedy the situation. My government will take suggestions from the common people, traders, businessmen, farmers, women, youth and employees to find out the best solutions for the problems being faced by them and the State budget will be prepared after taking into account their suggestions. Opinions of the neglected and deprived sections of the State will be reflected in the budget and the Government schemes.
59. In the end, I would like to reiterate my government's resolve to take the State forward on the path of peace, development and prosperity. It will seek cooperation from and offer help to, everyone, regardless of which side of the

political fence one stands. In this regard, my government especially extends its hand of friendship and cooperation to the opposition party. It is determined to consign the bitterness of the past to the realm of the past. It is determined to get ahead to, keep its date with the promised goal of peace, prosperity and all-round development. With full dedication and commitment, with faith in the potential of Punjab and in collaboration with its citizens, my government will work to bring back the heydays of Punjab and build a Punjab that we know we can be – the No. 1 state in the country. This will be a revolutionary model of inclusive governance in partnership with citizens.

60. I wish you all a very happy and meaningful tenure and am confident that discussions in the House will transcend all the political barriers and reflect the highest traditions of democratic values, dignity and placing our concerns for the progress and welfare of the State above short-term political gains.

JAI HIND !