

Gangtok, March 16: On the second day of the budget session, the Chief Minister Mr. Pawan Chamling, who is also the Minister-in-Charge of Finance, Revenue and Expenditure Department presented the Annual Budget for the financial year 2017-18 in the form of Explanatory Memorandum, Annual Financial Statement, Estimates of Receipts and Demands for Grants to the Annual Budget 2017-18.

The Chief Minister in his address expressed that, “we in Sikkim have already fulfilled the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in the State. It also gives me immense happiness to share with the people that our development policies and programmes from day one have been tailored to attain these many sustainable goals.” “I am pleased to propose Sustainable Development as the central theme of this budget presentation”, said the Chief Minister. (the full text of the Chief Minister’s budget speech can be read in)

The discussion and voting on the annual Budget for the year 2017-18 will be taken up on March 17th, 2017.

Earlier, the Chief Minister who is also the Minister- in-Charge of Finance, Revenue and Expenditure Department presented the third Supplementary Demands for Grants for the year 2016-17. The discussion and voting on the Third Supplementary Demands for Grants for the year 2016-17 will be taken up on March 17th, 2017.

The second day of the budget session also saw various queries being put forth by Member of the House, Mr. R. N. Chamling pertaining to Health Care, Human Services and Family Welfare Department and Energy and Power Department.

While replying to the queries, Minister-in-Charge of Health Care, Human Services and Family Welfare Department, Mr. A.K. Ghatani stated that Mission Healthy is an ongoing programme where actual results will only be seen after some years. However, health indicators like IMR, MMR, Institutional deliveries and immunization have shown tremendous improvement and are better than the National average.

In the CATCH programme, Round 1, 5,19,968 (five lakh, nineteen thousand, nine hundred and sixty eight) people were screened. Around 1,50,000 (one lakh fifty thousand) Smart Health Cards have been issued to those who have undergone second round of health checkup also. In the 2nd round, emphasis is being given to detection of lifestyle diseases like diabetes and hyper tension and of oral, breast and cervical cancers.

Replying to another query the Health Minister Mr. A.K.Ghatani stated that till date 37 manufacturing licenses have been issued to pharmaceutical companies in the State. Price control of the medicine is not under the purview of the State Government. Retail prices of the medicines are uniformed all over the country.

Similarly answering to another question, the Health Minister informed that essential medicines are made available in all the health facilities of the State as per schedule which have been notified. Procurement of medicines is done through open tender where every attempt is made to procure generic medicines.

However, all the medicines required by the Department are not available in the generic form. It is proposed that henceforth, procurement of the medicines will be done directly from reputed manufacturers so that the best quality medicines are made available to the public.

While replying to the query raised by Member Mr.R.N.Chamling, the Minister-in-Charge for Energy and Power Department, Mr. D.D. Bhutia said that the Hydro Electric Projects in which construction activities have stopped due to equity funding are -

1. 500 MW Teesta- VI Hydro Electric Project
2. 120 MW Rangit -IV Hydro Electric Project

The 500 MW Teesta - VI Hydro Electric Project was being developed by M/s Lanco, Teesta Hydro Power Limited(LTHPL) and the project had achieved physical progress of 52%. The 120 MW Rangit -IV Hydro Electric Project was being developed by M/s Jal Power Corporation Ltd. (JPCL) and the physical progress of the Project is about 50%. As M/s Lanco, Teesta Hydro Power Ltd.(LTHPL) and M/s Jal Power Corporation Ltd. (JPCL) could not raise any further equity, the construction works of the projects has stopped as no funds are available for continuing the Construction works of the projects.

The Government of Sikkim has conducted various meetings at Delhi with the representatives of the Ministry of Power, National Hydro Power Corporation (NHPC), Power Trading Corporation(PTC), Power Finance Corporation(PFC), Rural Electrification Corporation(REC), Developers and Lenders of the projects to find suitable way forward for the revival of the projects. Subsequently, various follow up meetings were taken up by the Joint Secretary (Hydro), Ministry of Power, Government of India and directions were issued to the promoters and lenders of the project to propose viable way forward by providing admissible concessions and haircuts to ensure the viability of the projects. However, since the promoters and the lenders of the projects were unwilling to provide any concessions to ensure the viability of the projects and were insisting the Government of Sikkim to increase its equity from 26% to 51%, the matter was put up to the High Powered Committee (HPC) constituted by the Government of Sikkim to examine the matter. The HPC reviewed and deliberated the matter with the consortium of lenders, promoters and all other stakeholders. Since, the proposal for the revival of the projects was not found to be feasible as per the viability of the projects, it was recommended by the High Powered Committee that the Government of Sikkim would not be infusing any equity or increasing its equity from 26% to 51% in the projects. The Government of Sikkim is actively pursuing the matter with consortium of lenders of the projects including Central Public Sector Organization like National Hydro Power Corporation (NHPC), North

Eastern Electric Power Corporation(NEEPCO) and National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) etc. for early revival of the projects.

During the discussion on Motion of Thanks on Governor's address, the Chief Minister Mr. Pawan Chamling, who is also the Leader of the House expressed his gratitude to the Governor Mr. Shrinivas Patil for his address to the House.

Member of the House Mr. R.N. Chamling also took part in the discussion.

The discussion on Motion of Thanks on the Governor's address was passed by the House.

In the legislative business, five Amendment Bills were introduced by the Minister-in-Charge for Human Resource Development Department, Government of Sikkim, Mr. R. B. Subba. The Bills were the Sikkim University (Amendment) Bill, Bill No. 1 of 2017, the Institute of Chartered Financial Analysis of India University Sikkim (Amendment) Bill, Bill No. 4 of 2017, the Shri Ramasamy Memorial University Sikkim (Amendment) Bill, Bill No. 5 of 2017, the Sikkim Manipal University of Health, Medical and Technological Sciences (Amendment) Bill, Bill No 6 of 2017 and the Vinayaka Missions Sikkim University (Amendment) Bill, Bill No 7 of 2017. The discussions and voting of these Amendment Bills will be taken up on March 17th 2017.