

Hon'ble MR. SPEAKER, Sir,

With your permission, I beg to move the following Demand for the financial year 2007-2008.

On the recommendation of the Governor, I beg to move that a sum of Rs. 57,44,60,000/- may be granted for expenditure vide Demand No. 31, Major Head : "2251-Secretariat-Social services-00-090-Secretariat", "2251-Secretariat-Social services-00-789-Special Component Plan for SC" & 2251-Secretariat-Social services-00-090-796-Tribal Areas Sub-Plan (Rs. 33,34,60,000/-) Major Head : "4070-Capital Outlay on Other Administrative Services" (Rs. 22,00,00,000/-), and Major Head : "6859-Loans for Telecommunication & Electronics Industries"(Rs.2,10,00,000/-). This inclusive of a sum of Rs. 19,14,92,000/- only already voted on account.

In moving this grant, I would like to mention that West Bengal has emerged as a preferred IT destination in the country as a whole and particularly in the eastern region of India. The State Govt. has also taken up initiatives to take the advantages of Information Technology to the common people of the entire State through e-Governance.

2. Hon'ble Speaker, Sir, at present more than 200 software companies are working in West Bengal with an employment of more than 50,000 professionals. In the current financial year, the number of new employment is more than 10000, which is expected to be at least 15000 in next year. There is existing built-up IT space in Kolkata of 3.5 million sq. ft. constructed by the developers and 2 million sq. ft. constructed by the companies for their own use. The export value i.e. earnings from software exports, are likely to touch approximately Rs. 3500 crore in the current financial year. In the current financial year, the growth rate of software export is expected to be not only higher than the national average, but also higher than that of the previous year.

3. Hon'ble Members may be aware that Rajarhat is going to be a very important IT hub in the country. Forty one small and medium software companies have been allotted 0.25 – 2 acres land per company by HIDCO at Rajarhat. TCS has taken 40 acres of land at Rajarhat for their future expansion. Besides that, several renowned developers like DLF, Unitech etc. have also got land to provide space for IT companies. At Nonadanga around 10 acres of land has been recommended for allotment to IT companies by KMDA. Similarly, several IT companies including Cognizant, British Telecom, Patni Computers, etc. and infrastructure providers have been allotted land within 130 acres of Bantala IT SEZ. Several IT buildings have been erected/are under construction by private developers. There will be huge addition of 20 million sq ft. of such built-up space in Kolkata in the next two to three years' time based on sanctioned projects. This amount of built-up space synchronises with the kind of growth that the State is targeting in the next three to four years' time. Riverside development at Batanagar and IT & Auto City at Hind Motors will further augment the availability of space. Efforts have also been initiated to set up IT Parks outside Kolkata at Siliguri, Haldia, Kharagpur and Durgapur. Price Water House Coopers have been given responsibility to study the prospects of these four cities and Kalyani to grow as IT hubs.

4. Aggressive promotion and road-shows have been undertaken by the Department in this year. Owing to participation in Trade Fairs, workshops and seminars, one-to-one meeting with companies and winning of Award in Bangalore IT Fair this year, many new companies like Rolta India, WIP etc. have shown interest in setting up operations in Kolkata. The progress made has prompted several US based Study Organizations like NeoIT and Tholon Inc. to rank Kolkata as a top destination for Business Process Outsourcing. The present infrastructure of West Bengal is attracting the several IT industries to invest here. This infrastructure includes transport, power, talent pool, law

and order situation, cost effectiveness, etc. To enhance the infrastructure of telecom connectivity, we have demanded to the central government to provide an optical fibre cable landing station at Haldia. The Hon'ble members may be aware that these cable landing stations are already present in Chennai and Mumbai.

5. IT Department is fully conscious that to have a sustainable growth of IT over the years, we need to stress also on manufacturing. Some hardware industries have grown in the State, notable among which are Zenitis and Chirag. State government has taken a number of initiatives to attract investments in high-end technologies and software development in the fields of VLSI as well as IT hardware & chip manufacturing sector in the state. IIT Kharagpur has been given responsibility to prepare a concept note to formalize a scheme to bring these type of companies. An "India Design Center", unique in nature and first time in the country, has been planned to house important semiconductor players in one place. This center will be a single building to have the facility for R&D, training, incubation as well as commercial processing for companies. It has also been decided that an advanced IT park will be developed at Kharagpur with a view to leverage advantage of IIT Kharagpur. This Park has been planned to house companies dealing in high-end Software development, R&D operations for VLSI and Microprocessors, embedded Systems etc. IIT Kharagpur has applied to the Government of India for a research fabrication laboratory. The state government has fully endorsed this move and also written to the Govt. of India to provide it. The state has observed the new semiconductor policy announced by the Govt. of India and has a plan to frame up its own policy to compliment it.

6. Substantial fund have also been provided in this year's budget for providing seed capital to IT/ITeS units in order to act as a catalyst for growth and enable them to develop themselves. For this purpose, a company named Webel Venture Capital Limited has been floated and a committee has been formed to scrutinize the applications for such assistance in the form of Venture Capital.

7. To attract the industries we are providing some incentives following the IT Policy 2003. In addition to that, in this year we like to provide a new incentive known as training incentive. The companies providing new appointments may apply for this incentive. This incentive is unique in nature and is expected to help the IT industries, many of whom have to provide rigorous training for their employees.

8. The growth of IT industries is highly dependent on the supply of the talent pool. The academic institutions of the state have a tradition of producing quality talents which are necessary for IT industries to grow. In view of the huge manpower required to cope with the IT/ITeS growth projection in the State during next four years' time, we need to produce more number of quality professionals in the future. Indian Institute of Science, Education and Research has already started operation in Kolkata. Some new academic institutes are going to be set up in West Bengal. Hon'ble members are aware that to provide the talent pool in Information Technology, the Government of India has established Indian Institute of Information Technologies in some states. The state government has demanded to the Government of India to establish Indian Institute of Information Technology and Security in West Bengal. The availability and employability of the students coming out of engineering colleges are also to be assured. The State produces 18,000 graduate engineers and about 2 lakh graduates in different streams every year. Though till now the employability in this State is higher than that of any other state, in order to optimize the availability of resources to the demand of the industries, IT Department has identified areas which need to be addressed by the State Govt. Finishing School, is one such step in this direction. The aim of the Finishing School would be to brush up soft skills and communication skills of graduates/final year students of both engineering and non-engineering faculties for making them employment ready. This Department has already

opened a Finishing School in Taratala Industrial Estate with the initiative of Webel which has received good response. Another such school in Durgapur has also been opened with an object to cater the growth of IT industries in Durgapur and also West Bengal. Similar initiatives are also being taken by private organizations.

9. Hon'ble Members are aware that WBSWAN(West Bengal State Wide Area Network) was launched in August 2001, for providing a computer networking backbone across the State for implementation of various e-Governance applications including voice, video and data transfer over Internet Protocol. In the district of Burdwan, connectivity upto the Gram Panchayat level has been completed as a Pilot Project. Steps have also been taken for establishing horizontal connectivity between various offices in the districts, sub-divisions, blocks as well as in Kolkata. Connectivity upto the Block level under WBSWAN Expansion Programme in the other districts of the State is likely to be established within 2007-08.

10. Under NeGP(National e-Governance Plan) substantial amount has been spent on Capacity Building for conceptualizing, developing and managing the e-Governance project under NeGP. The 14 MMP (Mission Mode Project) Departments/Directorates, chosen under NeGP, have started preparing their Detailed Project Reports(DPRs) with the help of their consultants selected for this purpose in a transparent manner. The DPRs are likely to be ready within first six months of 2007-08 based on which funds would be allotted by the respective line ministries of Govt. of India for implementation of their projects with a view to providing better citizen-centric services.

11. Hon'ble Members may be aware that the Department of Information Technology, Govt. of India in October 2006, brought out Guidelines for Implementation of the Common Service Centres(CSCs) Scheme. The Panchayat & Rural Development Department of the State Govt. is functioning as Nodal Department in this regard. Service Centre Agencies for setting up of CSCs at panchayat level have been identified by P&RD Department and CSCs(Kiosks) for providing better citizen centric services would become functional very soon. Funds for this purpose are being provided primarily to the P&RD Department, Govt. of West Bengal by IT Department, Govt. of India.

12. Bankura and Jalpaiguri have been chosen by the Department under e-District Programme and proposals for the same have been sent to DIT, Govt. of India. This would enable the automation of workflow and internal process of the District Administration as well as seamless integration of various Departments like Health, Land & Land Reforms, Panchayat & Rural Development Department etc. for providing improved services to the citizens as envisaged under the programme. The initial funding will be done by the Department of Information Technology, Govt. of India and later the State will have to bear the recurring cost.

13. Hon'ble members are aware that a portal named 'Banglar Mukh' was used by the State Government. A new initiative has been taken to design Banglar Mukh in a new way.

14. Honorable Members are aware that one of our goals is to provide service to everybody through Information Technology. To implement it in effective manner, we need to provide the service through Bengali. There are several problems existing in the use of Bangali in internet, computing. A new initiative is going to be taken this year to promote "Bangla Computing". Standardization in coding, key board layout, fonts etc. are important issues in this respect. We need a

centre to execute it.

15. The use of proprietary software is causing large license fees and dependence on few multinational companies. Many countries (China, Germany, Denmark, UK, etc.) are now shifting to the usage of open source software instead of licensed software. The National Knowledge Commission has also suggested recently to use open source in case of E-governance activities. Several Departments of Govt. of India, Banks, several public sectors have now started to use open source software. New initiative will be taken to promote open source software instead of proprietary software. In an endeavour to promote Open Source Software in every sphere of life and work of citizen and government departments, it has now been planned to create a Centre wherefrom guidance can be obtained on any specific problems. Presently people using open source has to wait from unidentified respondents for their problems which is quite uncertain.. This Centre will resolve these problems to a great extent.

16. West Bengal Electronics Industries Development Corporation (WBEIDC) or Webel which is under the administrative control of this Department acts as a single window support centre to assist investors in Information Technology and Information Technology enabled services sectors. Webel has implemented several orders successfully to assist the various government departments. It has also taken the responsibilities to offer technology in some socially important areas (eg. telemedicine, technology for blind schools). Webel has undertaken the tasks of establishing connectivity between Block and GPs under National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) in the district of Burdwan as a Pilot Project. This is an unique effort of Webel, which may be acclaimed throughout the country. The Webel Toonz Academy, run by Webel is the first of its kind in eastern India in the sphere of animation. It is located at Sector-V, Salt Lake.

17. Hon'ble Members may also be aware that restructuring efforts have been initiated in Webel and its subsidiaries. The financial condition of Webel has improved.

18. With these words, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I move for sanction of the demand I have proposed for expenditure during 2007-08 on account of development in the IT sector of this State.

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