

SPECIAL MENTIONS**Need for early completion of Teesta Irrigation-cum-Energy Project in West Bengal**

SHRI TARINI KANTA ROY (West Bengal): Sir, my special mention is on the need for an early completion of the Teesta Irrigation-cum-Energy Project in West Bengal.

Sir, the Teesta Irrigation-cum-Energy Project in West Bengal is one of the largest projects of its kind, but it remains neglected for a long period. The Central Government had taken up this project in early 1970s. However, right from the beginning, the project has witnessed unnecessary delays and it took more than half a decade to start the project's work in 1977. Quarter of a century has passed since then, but more than 65 per cent of the project including the left bank canal still remains untouched and the cost has escalated over the years. The Project began with an initial estimated cost of nearly Rs. 70 crores. In the subsequent years, the West Bengal Government, within its limited resources, spent Rs. 833 crore while the Central Government's contribution remains Rs. 105 crore only. According to estimates, Rs. 700 crore is further needed to complete the project.

The project would provide irrigation facilities to at least nine lakh hectares of land in six districts of Northern part of West Bengal. It would be a life-line for these areas where a majority of the population belongs to Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes and backward communities.

I apprehend, if this slow pace of growth continues further, the very objective of this Teesta Project will be defeated.

Hence, Sir, I request the Central Government to immediately take up the issue on priority basis to complete the project as soon as possible. This would entail immediate release of sufficient funds by the Central Government.

[THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair]

Demand for development of J and K State

PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ (Jammu and Kashmir): Madam, I want to place on record my deep appreciation for the most credible task the Election Commission of India performed in the Jammu and Kashmir State during the conduct of elections to the J and K Assembly recently. The fact that the elections were conducted fairly has been recognised both nationally