

Seventeenth Loksabha

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Title: Regarding water scarcity in Darjeeling hills, Terai and Dooars in West Bengal - laid

SHRI RAJU BISTA (DARJEELING): Despite receiving second highest rainfall after Cherrapunji, water scarcity is the most chronic issue in both urban and rural areas of Darjeeling hills, Terai, and Dooars. Due to unplanned development of urban cities and inadequate infrastructure, traditional water sources like lakes, springs, and canals are drying up. Unchecked illegal sand and stone mining from rivers have reduced the retention capacity of our rivers. Multiple dams built over Teesta River and its tributaries have caused much destruction to our river systems and water cycle. While our region receives enough rain, what we lack is the resources to retain the abundant water. Nearly 15 Lakh people live under acute water shortage including towns of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Kurseong, Mirik, Siliguri – along with the Matigara, Phansidewa, Khoribari, Naxalbari blocks.

I urge upon the Government to take a holistic approach to the Har Ghar Jal Programme, and also consider rejuvenating and reviving local water bodies.

Thank you.