

Title: Need to provide special package for the overall development of North Bengal.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi. So, the seniors are not leaving even matters to be raised under Rule 377 to the juniors.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI (RAIGANJ): Sir, because of the seniority, many a time, I have lost the opportunity to raise matters pertaining to my constituency. That is the problem with all the Chief Whips.

In North Bengal, Development Council has been constituted one month ago. North Bengal is having a serious regional imbalance for not having any positive growth in road infrastructure, health, rural electrification, industry and agriculture potential. Crisis of Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur and Malda districts are beyond imagination. Unemployment is also rising alongwith some ethnic Scheduled Caste problem. Flood management in this region has not received adequate attention for the last 23 years resulting in disaster in Malda and Dinajpur districts, both South and North.

The only National Highway No. 34 is somehow acting as a corridor between the North-East and the rest of India without expansion of network and regular maintenance. Road over-bridges at the railway level crossings are required at several places like Samsi, Dalkhola, Kishanganj etc. I have urged the hon. Prime Minister and the Planning Commission to bring out a White Paper on North Bengal to understand the shortcomings and the deficiencies that have caused a serious regional imbalance.

I, therefore, once again draw the attention of the Government for a special plan of action for the Ninth Plan in so far as North Bengal is concerned and to provide special resource packages to North Bengal Development Council to the tune of Rs. 500 crore as an *ad hoc* grant to respond to the flood management, rural electrification, road infrastructure and the education infrastructure and health at this stage.