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Title: Regarding Indo-Bangladesh problems.

\*SHRI PRASANTA KUMAR MAJUMDAR (BALURGHAT) : Respected Madam Chairperson, I invite your kind attention to the following matter of urgent public importance. We are pleased to know that Hon. Prime Minister of India is going to visit Bangladesh on 6<sup>th</sup> of September. He will take up various issues with the Government of Bangladesh. Hence, through you, I want to request him to have a talk about the sharing of Teesta water between India and Bangladesh.

We all know that the Teesta river which originates from the Himalayas flows through Sikkim, passes through West Bengal and reaches Bangladesh. It is a fact that the northern part of Bengal is still backward and lagging behind in industrial development. Only major economy of the area is tea industry. But most of the tea gardens are closed and labourers are in great difficulties. River Teesta is the principal source of water for this region which is used for irrigation purposes. Five districts of North Bengal i.e. North Dinajpur, South Dinajpur, Cooch Behar, Darjiling and Jalpaiguri are greatly dependent on this water which helps in agriculture and fruit cultivation also. The Teesta Barrage project is a national project. Thus my submission is that the Government decision to share water is welcome but 50:50 share is impractical. Though Bangladesh is our neighbouring country and we have cordial relations with that nation, the idea of sharing half the water seems untenable. If that happens, then a huge quantity of water will be diverted to Bangladesh leaving us high and dry. I am not against sharing of water but my only concern is that such quantum of water should not be given to our neighbour as it may adversely affect the development of the entire area. Teesta is the lifeline of North Bengal. If sufficient water is not available to one and a half crore of people staying there, they may be forced to starve.

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\*English translation of the speech originally delivered in Bengali.

So I request Hon. Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to take up the matter with due care with Bangladesh Government and try to reach the best possible conclusion. I also request the Central Government to take Hon. Chief Minister of West Bengal Smt. Mamata Banerjee into confidence and consult her in this regard. It is in the interest of our country and the entire northern part of Bengal. So I urge upon you for fair and just treatment of the people of our state.

Madam, with these words I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak and conclude my speech.