

## **Affected Citizens of Teesta (ACT)**

**Press Release**

**8th February 2009**

### **ACT press release on arrest of lepchas**

Affected Citizens of Teesta has viewed with serious concern the arbitrary arrests of forty three innocent Lepchas, including eight young girls, who were picked up from their residences in Lingdong, Passingdang and other villages of Dzongu on 7th February 2009.

They were picked up on the basis of a first information report filed by Himgiri Pvt.Ltd, developers of Panan Hydroproject, at the Mangan Police Thana alleging destruction of all their equipment at the project sites in Dzongu. Forty one of the forty three arrested youngsters were placed in police custody at the Mangan Thana. The arrested youth include Dawa Lepcha (General Secretary ACT), Tenzing Lepcha (Executive Member ACT), Ligden Lama (President, Sangha of Dzongu) and Gyatso Lepcha (President, Concerned Lepchas of Sikkim).

Affected Citizens of Teesta condemns the arbitrary arrests of innocent Lepchas of Dzongu and third degree interrogation methods of the police and demand the immediate and unconditional release of all arrested youngsters.

Affected Citizens of Teesta also demands an investigation into the links between the promoters of Panan hydro project, their primary promoters the Nagarjuna Group and the Satyam (Maytas) scam.

Affected Citizens of Teesta once again reiterates its demand for the scrapping of all mega hydel projects in the Lepcha reserve of Dzongu.

Tseten Lepcha, Chief Coordinator, Affected Citizens of Teesta