

# **Joint Action Committee for Protection of Holyland Dzongu**

**Press Release**

**6th December 2007**

**Camp New Delhi:** A delegation of Lepchas from Sikkim, Kalingpong and Darjeeling comprising affected Citizens of Teesta and concerned Lepchas of Sikkim, Sangha of Dzongu under the Joint Action Committee is on 2 day protest Demonstration at Jantar Mantar in Delhi against the Mega hydel projects over Teesta and Especially in the protected Lepcha Reserve of Dzongu.

The protestors were joined by the civil society organizations, people's movements and people's organizations of Delhi.

Sh. Kuldip Nayar, Journalist and ex-member of Parliament, Sh. Surendra Mohan, veteran Socialist and Ex Member of Parliament and Sh. Abani Roy, Member of Parliament joined the protestors in solidarity and spoke against the policy of the government of India which is going to wipe out the entire culture and identity of the Lepcha people.

The Delegation also met Mr. Manishankar Aiyer, Minister incharge for North-East, who gave them assurance to look into the matter positively. Rahul Gandhi, General Secreatry, INC gave a patient hearing to the delegation and promised that the party would review the situation.

Three members of the delegation met Mr. Kireet Parikh, Member, Planning Commission to the apprise him of the situation arising out of the proposed mega projects and the apprehension that the projects will not only destroy the environment but also the culture, identity and livelihood of the Lepcha community. Mr. Parikh accepted that development cannot be done at the cost of complete destruction of a community and promised that he will raise the issue with the Ministry of Power and will visit Dzongu as a Member of the Planning Commission sometime in January.

While the protestors are in Delhi now, the relay hunger strike still continues in Gangtok into its 168th day.

The Joint Action Committee vows to intensify their agitation further and is seeking solidarity and support from the civil society organizations across India.

Lyangsong Lepcha, President, Joint Action Committee

For more details please see: <http://weepingsikkim.blogspot.com>

and <http://www.actsikkim.com>