

Regarding alleged diversion of tea gardens for non-tea purposes in West Bengal-Laid

SHRI RAJU BISTA (DARJEELING): Decision of Government of West Bengal to allow 30% of tea garden land to be diverted for non-tea purposes is a direct attack on the livelihood of tea garden workers and indigenous communities in Darjeeling Hills, Terai, and Dooars. Earlier, under the guise of 'Tea Tourism,' the State Government had already permitted 15% of tea garden land for non-tea use, leading to the unchecked construction of hotels and resorts. Now, by doubling this allocation to 30%, the Government is enabling real estate takeovers, which will destroy the tea industry. For generations, tea and cinchona garden workers have been exploited and deprived of land rights. Worse, this decision was made without consulting the affected workers or elected representatives from these areas. This move will severely impact the Gorkhas, Adivasis, Rajbangshis, Rabhas, Koches, Meches, Totos, Bengalis, and others. I urge the Central Government to intervene and safeguard the rights of the people.