

ESDDAPF Urges Government to Address Concerns Over Proposed Siang Upper Multipurpose Project



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PASIGHAT, Dec 21: The East Siang Downstream Dam Affected Peoples' Forum (ESDDAPF) has called on the government to safeguard the lives, lands, and properties of downstream communities in East Siang District, which they fear may be adversely affected by the proposed Siang Upper Multipurpose Project (SUMP). The forum expressed these concerns during a press conference at the Pasighat Press Club in Siang Guest House today.

The SUMP, a super mega reservoir dam proposed for Upper Siang District, has raised alarm among local communities. Representatives from 24 villages surrounding Pasighat, along with intellectuals, retired personnel, NGOs, and experts, convened on October 8, 2024, at Gidi Notko, Pasighat, to discuss the potential downstream impacts. This meeting led to the formation of the ESDDAPF, according to General Secretary Jobomchang Mengu.

In a second meeting held today, the forum elected Oni Tamuk as President and Jobomchang Mengu as General Secretary, solidifying their organizational leadership. ESDDAPF now represents 72 villages across East Siang District, unified in their efforts to address the potential risks posed by the dam.

“The objective of the forum is to ensure East Siang District is recognized as a direct impact zone of SUMP. ESDDAPF will work tirelessly to protect the district from potential economic, social, and environmental devastation,” said Oni Tamuk, ESDDAPF President. He added that the forum plans to engage with the government soon to present their demands and concerns.

Currently, ESDDAPF comprises 50 core committee members and decentralized branches across the district’s 72 villages. The organization benefits from technical insights provided by national agencies specializing in downstream dam impact studies, Mengu noted.

The National Hydro Electric Power Corporation (NHPC) has identified three potential sites for the dam in Upper Siang and Siang districts: between Parong and Degin villages, near Riga village at Ugeng, and between Ditte-Dime and Geku.

Despite the government's assertion that the project will boost regional infrastructure and economy while addressing national security concerns related to Chinese mega dams upstream in the Tibet Autonomous Region, opposition remains strong. Local groups, including the Siang Indigenous Farmers Forum (SIFF), argue that the dam could displace indigenous communities and severely harm the environment.

The ESDDAPF emphasized the need for public consultation and government acknowledgment of their district as a high-impact zone to ensure the safety and well-being of its people.

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BY MAKSAM TAYENG

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