



# **BIJU JANATA DAL**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Biju Janata Dal Delegation Raises Concerns Over Polavaram Project at Press Meet in New Delhi**

**New Delhi: 05/12/2024:** A high-level delegation from the Biju Janata Dal (BJD), led by Shri Debi Prasad Mishra, Ex-Cabinet Minister, Government of Odisha, and comprising Dr. Sasmit Patra, Honourable MP, Rajya Sabha, Shri Manas Mangaraj, Honourable MP, Rajya Sabha, Smt. Sulata Deo, Honourable MP, Rajya Sabha, Shri Niranjan Bishi, Honourable MP, Rajya Sabha, Shri Subashis Khuntia Honourable MP Rajya Sabha Shri Ramesh Majhi Ex MP, Shri Pradeep Majhi Ex MP, Dr Priyabrata Majhi Media Coordinator, Shri Bhrgu Buxipatra Spokesperson, Shri Manhor Randhari MLA, Shri Manas Madkami Ex MLA and several other key leaders, met with the Chairman of the Central Water Commission (CWC) today to express deep concerns over the ongoing Polavaram Project and its potential impact on Odisha, especially the Malkangiri District.

The BJD delegation highlighted several critical issues regarding the project, including discrepancies in the submergence levels and the design flood capacity. They pointed out that the CWC's revision of the design flood to 50 lakh cusecs, without proper consultation with Odisha, threatens the safety and livelihood of tribal communities in the state. A report from IIT Roorkee further estimates that a flood of 58 lakh cusecs could inundate large areas in Odisha, far exceeding the previously agreed submergence levels.

The delegation also raised concerns about the inadequate resettlement and rehabilitation (R&R) plans for the tribal populations affected by the Polavaram project, noting that proper surveys and consultations have not been conducted. The members requested that the Ministry of Jal Shakti and CWC take immediate action to conduct a fresh backwater study, address the safety concerns of the affected communities, and ensure that the R&R process is completed before any further construction of the dam.

Shri Debi Prasad Mishra, speaking at a press conference following the meeting, emphasized that the safety and well-being of the people of Malkangiri must be the top priority, and called on the Central Government to intervene and halt the construction of the dam until all issues are addressed.

"The concerns of Odisha, especially regarding the impact of the Polavaram Project on our tribal communities, have been repeatedly ignored. We demand a fresh study of the backwater effects and a proper review of the environmental and social implications of the project. Without addressing these critical concerns, no further work on the dam should proceed," stated Shri Mishra.

The BJD delegation also referred to a 2022 Supreme Court order, which urged the Ministry of Jal Shakti to play a leading role in resolving the technical and environmental issues surrounding the project. The delegation expressed frustration that the Odisha Government's repeated calls for action have yet to be adequately addressed.

The BJD has reiterated its commitment to ensuring the safety and welfare of the people of Odisha and has urged the Central Government to take immediate corrective action regarding the Polavaram Project.

**Dr. Priyabrata Majhi**

**Media Co-ordinator, Biju Janata Dal**