

**Regarding safety lapses in the NH-66 construction work across Kerala, particularly Aroor-Thuravoor elevated corridor**

**DR. SHASHI THAROOR (THIRUVANANTHAPURAM):** Thank you very much hon. Chairperson, Sir. (*Interruptions*)

I wish to draw the attention of the hon. Minister for Road, Transport and Highways to the persistent delays and alarming safety lapses in the National Highway 66 construction work across Kerala, particularly, the AroorThuravoor Elevated corridor which has led to multiple accidents, environmental degradation and tragic loss of life. At least, 40 such accidents have been reported from 80 tonne concrete girders collapsing on vehicles in Arumaloor. Beam collapses on the AroorThuravoor service road to a section of the entire NH 66 collapsing in particular the 12.75 kilometre long AroorThuravoor 6-lane Elevated Highway, which is one of the longest flyover in India, is, plagued by poor planning, inadequate lighting and unsafe diversions. These repeated delays and failures suggest that there is something fundamentally wrong with the way the project implementation units in Kerala function and how they are supervised. The PIOs, under the purview of the National Highways Authority of India, must be held accountable for structural failure and negligence. Moreover, a revised completion timeline should be publicly announced along with updates and quarterly progress.

Sir, I urge the hon. Minister to intervene and order a safety audit of all the ongoing NH construction zones in Kerala and to suspend high risk construction, until safety clearances are obtained, and to expedite the process of compensation disbursement for the many victims of these 80 accidents. There is also a need for a systemic review at the Ministry-level, of all actions of these projects implementation units, including increased accountability of the parties responsible for all these accidents in Kerala, to alleviate the public distress, which is widespread, and ensure the safe and timely completion of these highway projects. Thank you.