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Title: Need to announce a financial package for construction of roads and bridges in Kuttanad, Kerala.

SHRI KODIKKUNNIL SURESH (MAVELIKKARA): Kuttanad, the rice bowl of Kerala, is famous for backwaters and backwater tourism. The farm land comprises of small islands surrounded by rivers, streams and small tributaries. Due to highly insufficient roads and bridges, the people completely depend on water transport. Due to heavy rainfall in the adjoining districts of Pathanamthitta, Idukki and Kottayam, there is a sudden rise of water in the backwaters of Kuttanad.

Kuttanad can be accessed from places on the N.H. 47 from Harippad to Alappuzha town in the district of Alappuzha and from places like Thiruvalla and Changanacherry through the Main Central Road passing through Kottayam. There are plenty of canals and rivers and therefore, the Government of Kerala has sent a proposal to construct around 19 bridges and roads. With the construction of these bridges and roads, all the remote and interior places will be connected with the main land. The roads proposed in the package has to cross many streams and canals, a large number of cross drain works and box culverts are also essential. Most of the streams are navigated with motor boats for transportation. It is estimated that the Government of Kerala would need around Rs. 69,160 lakh to complete these works.

Since the State of Kerala cannot meet this huge expenditure, the Government of Kerala has requested the Government to sanction Roads and Bridges in Kuttanad by announcing a Kuttanad Package for Roads and Bridges. I strongly urge upon the Government of India that such a package may please be announced at the earliest.