

Title : Regarding situation arising out of merger of Ananthpuri FM with Akashvani AM-Laid

**DR. SHASHI THAROOR (THIRUVANANTHAPURAM):** I wish to draw the Hon'ble Minister's attention to the unfortunate consequences of the merger of Ananthapuri FM with Akashvani AM, which has caused anguish to innumerable Keralites since late July 2023. Apart from the grievances of 4.5 million listeners, many of whom grew up tuning into Ananthapuri FM every morning, the merger rendered numerous staff members unemployed, plunging them into financial and emotional turmoil. Especially affected were the casual staff between the ages of forty and sixty who, owing to age and limited employment prospects, have been struggling to find new livelihoods. Every month Ananthapuri FM employed around a hundred part-time anchors, several among them being women who are also single parents. These anchors hosted 5-6 programmes every month, making their stints at Ananthapuri a vital stream of income. That an FM channel which was immensely popular and generated a yearly revenue of 1.5 crores, and which embodied the popular and literary culture of Kerala, should have thus been dismantled is regrettable. I also wonder why the option of instituting a separate FM transmitter for Ananthapuri was not explored. I urge the Minister to take swift action to address the hardships faced by those who have lost their jobs due to the merger and those who can no longer enjoy a beloved and widely-heard radio channel.