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Title: Need to repair Farakka bridge on river Ganga and also construct second alternative bridge there. - Laid

SHRI ABUL HASANT KHAN (JANGIPUR) : Farakka Barrage-cum-Bridge on river is strategically located and is the only link between the North-East and the rest of the country. National Highway No. 34 passes through the bridge and it also links Nepal, Bhutan, Indo-China Border at Nathu-La Pass.

Such an important bridge is in distress and the Farakka Barrage Bridge Authority have warned that a disaster may take place anytime if the loading pressure of vehicles continues and further increase. Apart from roadways, railways caters more than 20 pairs of trains every day.

Accordingly, the barrage authorities have approached the Central Government a number of times for an alternative second barrage with an estimated cost of Rs.120 crore. There was a provision for a second bridge on river Ganga when the existing bridge was constructed but the Centre had rejected the proposal which would cost nearly 120 crore rupees for want of fund. The existing bridge can earn 20 crore rupees annually through toll tax and initial investment for the second bridge can be made from there. Money can also be obtained from financial institutions.

I urge the Central Government to repair the existing bridge and construct the second alternative bridge immediately.