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Title: Situation arising due to strike called by All India Motor Transport Congress.

SHRI S. SEMMALAI (SALEM): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister of Road Transport and Highways regarding the 'strike call' given by the South Zone Motor Transporters Welfare Association affiliated to the All India Motor Transport Congress.

Over 22 lakh trucks in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Puducherry and Maharashtra will be off the roads in response to the strike. The Association has put forth certain demands including reduction in the toll charges, roll back of diesel price, reduction in third party insurance premium rate and also reduction of import duty on tyres.

Their demands are just and reasonable. The collection of toll in the National Highways and the charges are not only high but also arbitrary. The agreement entered into between National Highways Authority of India and concessionaries for collection of toll, lacks transparency, accountability and clarity. I believe, this is a concerted attempt to make the private toll operators to earn more by fleecing the vehicle users.

The increase in toll charges, leave heavy burden on the truck operators, which ultimately affects the consumers in the form of higher prices.

So, I earnestly appeal to the Government to hold negotiations with the Association and bring out an amicable settlement on the demands put forth by them and relieve the people from the hardship. I hope the Centre will act in time.