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Title: Regarding functioning of toll booths in the country.

SHRI P.K. BIJU (ALATHUR): Madam Speaker, thank you. I would like to raise an important matter before the House.

The number of toll booths is increasing year by year. Now we have 360 toll booths across the country as per the website of the NHAI. Our hon. Minister stated that the Government is going to scrap 125 toll booths in our country. Across the country, incidents of protests against toll booths are rising. These BOT toll people are trying to curtail fundamental rights of the people to travel and also the freedom of expression. Some of the toll booths are being run with the help of goons and anti-social elements. They are harassing even the Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri awardees, and also the Members of Parliament and Members of Legislative Assemblies. Some of the BOT companies have not given the actual expenditure statement for some of the works that they have done. They have given wrong expenditure statement and according to that they decide their toll charges for the vehicles.

In Maharashtra, as we all know, one of the tallest leaders of the Communist Party was brutally murdered. He was fighting against these toll booths and was fighting to protect the right of freedom of expression of our citizens.

I would urge upon the Government, to bring a strong legislation to stop such heinous crimes and atrocities in the toll booths. A direction must go from the Ministry to the BOT companies that their rates should be as per the Government directions. With these words, I thank you.

HON. SPEAKER:

Dr. A. Sampath,

Shri M.B. Rajesh,

Shri C.N. Jayadevan,

Adv. Joice George and

Shrimati P.K. Sreemathi Teacher are allowed to associate with the matter raised by Shri P.K. Biju.