

PRESS RELEASE

The safety of commuters and the interest of people is of paramount concern of the State. The State Government has been constantly impressing upon the implementing Agency- the NHIDCL- regarding the risks along the Dimapur- Kohima 4 lane and to expeditiously put in place safety measures especially on the stretches under Package -I considering the terrain. NHIDCL is the Agency responsible for maintaining Quality parameters and Safety standards of the Dimapur-Kohima 4 lane highway.

Following the 4th July 2023 rockfall incident at Paglapahar, the State Government had constituted a High Level Technical Committee (HLTC) on 5th July 2023. The HLTC submitted its report and recommendations which were conveyed to the NHIDCL on 19th July 2023 for immediate action. The NHIDCL was directed (1) To carry out short term measures as per the recommendations of the HLTC, and (2) To undertake comprehensive study of the terrain and to take up necessary measures, as recommended, in order to address and mitigate the risks in future.

In the month of December 2023, The State Government had also pointed out at the report and findings of IIT(Bombay) Independent Technical Expert Committee, wherein serious concerns were raised in regards to the construction of the road as well as the hill cutting method which pointed out significant deviations from IRC guidelines, inadequate slope protection, poor rock fall mitigation and non-compliance with safety and quality standards among other issues. As a follow up the NHIDCL was instructed to examine the works to be undertaken so as to make the NH 29 safe, smooth and an all-weather National Highway. These concerns of the State Government, in regards to the safety of the commuters of NH29, were brought to the notice of the office of the Managing Director, NHIDCL Hqs along with the concerns of the State Cabinet on 31st January 2024.

Taking cognizance of the growing safety concerns along the Paglapahar stretch, the State Cabinet in its meeting held on 22nd January 2024 had discussed at length the necessary measures to be taken up and had decided to engage an independent third party to undertake detailed study and to recommend measures so that the highway can be made safe for commuters. Accordingly, IIT Guwahati has been engaged to undertake this exercise which shall commence its studies soon. The State Cabinet had also questioned the NHIDCL how and why completion certificate for Dimapur-Kohima Package-II has been issued when several portions are still to be completed and quality issues remain to be addressed.

In the month of April 2024, the State Government had instructed the NHIDCL to submit the specific safety measures that had been put in place along the Paglapahar stretch of NH-29 and warned that they will be held solely responsible for failure on their part resulting in any incident/accident due to inadequate safety measures undertaken.

It may be underscored that in the interest of public and road safety of Dimapur-Kohima 4-lane of NH-29 with special regard to the Paglapahar stretch of NH-29, the State Government has officially taken up with NHIDCL on as many as eighteen occasions from 11/04/2023 to 19/06/2024 but no earnest tangible initiative has been observed on ground.

The State Government is making all possible efforts to make road travel safe for commuters. However, it was very distressing to witness the occurrence of another incident at Paglapahar stretch of NH-29 where a rockfall has resulted in injury of passengers and major damage to vehicle. The State Government is resolute to take up the matter with the concerned authorities in all seriousness to effectively address the matter and urge the proactive and sincere response of the NHIDCL to achieve this collective goal for safety of commuters.

SD/-

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