

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO - 272
ANSWERED ON – 18/03/2026

NATIONAL TUNNEL SAFETY STANDARDS AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

*272. DR. AJEET MADHAVRAO GOPCHADE:

Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Ministry has taken cognizance of serious safety concerns in road tunnels, including accidents in the Mumbai Coastal Road tunnel and tunnel collapses in Telangana and Uttarakhand, endangering workers;
- (b) whether Ministry has reviewed the adequacy of existing safety standards and maintenance protocols for tunnels;
- (c) whether international best practices, including tunnel safety management regulations followed in Hong Kong, have been examined in this regard; and
- (d) whether Ministry, in coordination with National Disaster Management Authority, proposes to frame uniform national regulations for tunnel safety applicable to Railways, National Highways and State Highways to prevent recurrence of such incidents?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

(SHRI NITIN JAIRAM GADKARI)

(a) to (d): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) to (d) OF RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 272 ANSWERED ON 18.03.2026 ASKED BY DR. AJEET
MADHAVRAO GOPCHADE REGARDING NATIONAL TUNNEL SAFETY
STANDARDS AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK.**

(a) to (d): The tunnels in the Mumbai Coastal Road Project have been implemented by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC). Similarly, the Srisailam Left Bank Canal (SLBC) tunnel in Telangana is being implemented by the Irrigation Department of the State Government. The Silkyara tunnel in Uttarakhand is on National Highway (NH)-134.

Tunnels on NHs are constructed in accordance with guidelines stipulated in the Indian Roads Congress code (IRC:SP:91-2019 - Guidelines for Road Tunnels). Appropriate safety measures, as per IRC guidelines, are adopted to safeguard workers and road users. The adequacy of existing safety standards and maintenance protocols has been critically reviewed in the light of recent incidents of tunnel collapse during construction and comprehensive guidelines covering Tunnel Alignment Studies, Prevention and Mitigation of Tunnel Collapses, and Standard Operating Procedures for passage of hazardous material vehicles through tunnels have been issued on 02.09.2025, 05.12.2025 and 27.01.2026 respectively.

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has initiated a collaborative effort with the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi to develop comprehensive National Guidelines for Tunnel Safety. To support this initiative, officials and experts from various organizations are contributing to the deliberations of the Technical Expert Committee (TEC). In framing these guidelines, a comprehensive review of existing national and international standards has been undertaken, with reference to safe design, construction, and operation/maintenance protocols of more than ten countries, including Hong Kong.

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