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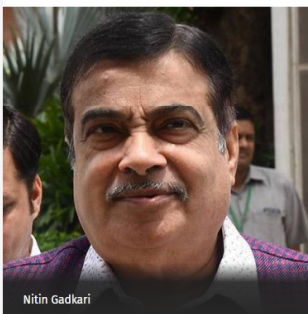
## Environment or economy, asks Nitin Gadkari



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, JULY 18, 2019 22:52 IST  
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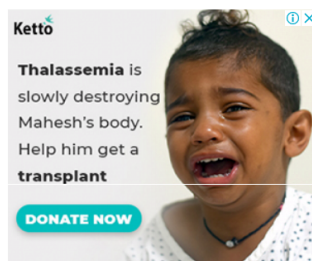
Nitin Gadkari

**"We are spending ₹1300 crore to build 9 kilometres [in Pench Tiger Reserve]...This is public money. It is up to you to decide whether it is correct or not," said Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari.**

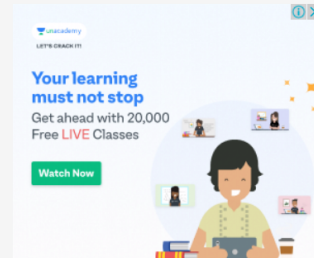
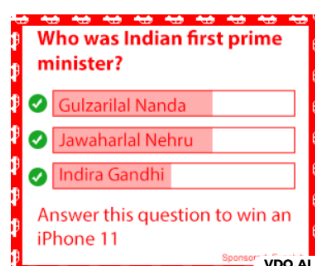
From water disputes to adopting road building technologies and development policy towards the minorities, the Question Hour in the Lok Sabha on Thursday had several interesting highlights.

Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari said "a poor country" must decide how far it can go in spending public money to protect environment and balance out development needs. His reply came in response to a question from Congress MP K. Suresh who asked if the Minister would consider building underpasses on the National Highway between Mysuru and Wayanad to protect tigers in the Bandipur wildlife sanctuary on the lines of the Pench Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh.

"We are spending ₹1300 crore to build 9 kilometres there [in Pench]...This is public money. It is up to you to decide whether it is correct or not," said Mr. Gadkari.



"I understand and respect the decision of the Supreme Court. But at the same time, we should remember our country is a poor country. We do not have road connectivity. Definitely, we are keenly interested to protect the life of tigers. That is absolutely correct. At the same time, it is also true that for a stretch of nine kilometres, we are spending ₹1,300 crore," he added.



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Karnataka MP Shobha Karandlaje speaking about the scarcity of drinking water in different parts of her State during question hour, also mentioned about the Cauvery water dispute with Tamil Nadu and pointed towards members from her neighbouring State, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, who were sitting in Opposition benches.

Many members burst into laughter when Speaker Om Birla remarked, “Fight there, not here.”

Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said most of the river water disputes among States were either in courts or in tribunals.

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At the end of the three-and-a-half hour meeting, Narendra Modi said he would consult Chief Ministers before deciding the exit strategy.

SOBHANA K. NAIR