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Kochi Metro Phase II work creates traffic chaos in Kakkanad

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CRISIS WORSENS   Jipson Sikhera

➤ Heavy rains escalate traffic in the region as most people use four-wheelers during rains

Traffic jam along Palarivatom-Kakkanad route

➤ Locals and employees near Kakkanad demand road widening as well as urgent road repair work to reduce traffic flow and accidents

➤ Residents' council in Thrikkakara scheduled a meeting on Friday to assess the worsening scenario and determine further steps

Kochi: Traffic congestion in Kakkanad, especially along main roads and interior routes leading to Infopark, has reached a breaking point, leaving commuters stranded for over an hour during peak times. The ongoing Metro Phase II work from Palarivattom towards Infopark was identified as the primary cause, and despite repeated assurances from authorities, no viable alternative route was introduced.

Infopark employees, who constitute a major chunk of daily traffic on the route, are bearing the brunt of the situation. According to Jidheesh P, an office-bearer of Prathidhwani, a welfare organization of Infopark employees, close to one lakh people work in the IT hub. "The stretch experiences peak traffic from 8.30am to 10.30am and 5.30pm to 7pm. Since schools reopened, the pressure has doubled, leading to severe delays for school buses as well," he said.

Jidheesh warned that with two new towers at Infopark nearing completion, the situation could deteriorate further. "The region lacks the infrastructure to handle the rising vehicle load," he added.

Locals too are voicing their frustrations. Thrikkakara residents' apex council president Salim Kunnumpuram said the traffic situation has paralyzed daily life in the area. "I've been receiving numerous complaints from residents

since last week. Congestion from Vazhakkala to Infopark is becoming unbearable," he said. The council submitted a request to Kochi Metro Rail Ltd (KMRL) seeking relief, but no action was taken yet.

Kunnumpuram also pointed out the poor condition of roads, riddled with potholes, which worsens the traffic problem and poses safety risks.

Meanwhile, Kochi Metro Rail Ltd (KMRL) managing director Loknath Behera said construction works of Phase II line would be expedited. "We initiated discussion with state govt representatives regarding approval for receiving financial support from AIIB, and fund crunch would not affect the ongoing works," he said.