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## Killer road creates village of widows in Telangana

AFP | October 12, 2015, 12.47 pm IST

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Representational image (Photo: AFP)

**Peddakunta:** For developing India, dangerous and potholed roads have long been a way of life. But one highway running through a village in the southern state of Telangana has gained a dire reputation, blamed for the deaths of scores trying to cross it.

A bypass road of national highway 44 snakes through Peddakunta village, cutting off the community from its headquarters on the other side.

Since the road was built in 2006, Peddakunta has been dubbed the "village of highway widows" with only one male adult left among the huts of 35 families. The rest of the village comprises women, children and the elderly.

Some 25 male residents have been killed in Peddakunta trying to reach the other side, locals say.

"My husband died in a bypass road accident and so did my brother and my father. There are no men to look after us in the family," Kurra Asli, 23, told AFP, holding up a faded photograph of her husband.

Another widow held up a black and white printout of her dead husband, his body lying on the bypass, his left foot crushed.

Locals have demanded a foot bridge or tunnel so they can safely cross the four-lane stretch to reach the headquarters to collect monthly pensions or find employment in other villages.

But widows say their demands have been ignored.

"No one will help us. Everyone will come, take photos and videos and go off," said K. Maani, 38, as she cooked over a stove made of mud.

"I do not have a gas stove or even a bathroom, no one is there to help us," said the mother of three.

India has some of the world's deadliest roads with more than 230,000 fatalities annually, according to the World Health Organization.

Transport analysts attribute the huge number of accidents to poor roads, ill-trained drivers and reckless driving.

The national government has put forward proposals for new legislation to make roads safer by stiffening lax traffic regulations.


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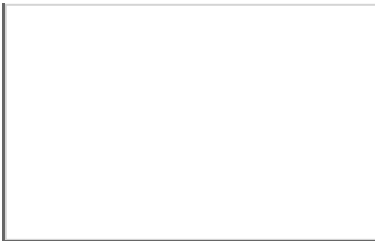
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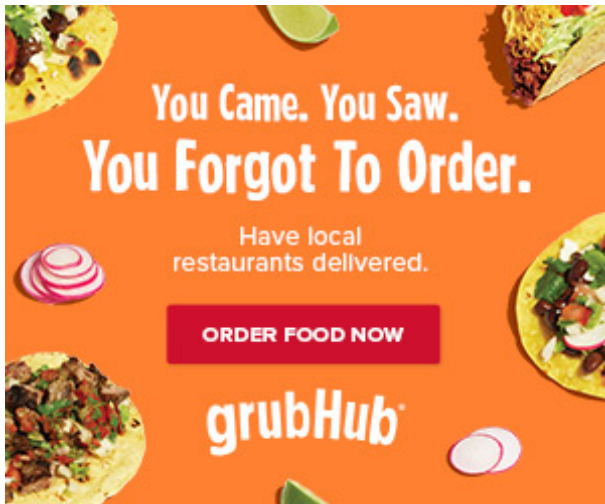
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