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Title: Regarding setting up of a citrus park in Manipur -laid.

DR. R.K. RANJAN (INNER MANIPUR): North-eastern region of India is the CITRUS depository of our country and it is also reported that many *Citrus* fruits originated from here. So, it enjoys a remarkable position in the genetic resources of the country.

Soil and climatic conditions along with physiographic landscape of the region is highly suitable for faster plant growth and fruit quality.

As many as 17 *Citrus* species have originated from this region.

Despite favourable genetic diversity and immense potential to raise the quality fruits, we are not doing enough for production, conservation and commercialization of these rare fruits. Climate change, depletion of natural resources, jhumming practices etc., result in genetic erosion and destruction of fruit species.

It is high time for the scientific community, planners and policy makers to think seriously for conservation and commercialization of citrus fruits of the Northeastern region.

Molecular and morphological characterization of the reported germplasm, evaluation and screening against biotic and abiotic stresses should be undertaken to safeguard and improve the existing plants. In the absence of these facilities our citrus genotypes are on the brink of extinction.

Therefore, to conserve and promote our valuable citrus genotypes, I urge upon the Union Government to set-up a CITRUS PARK under the

aegis of the CENTRAL AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY, IMPHAL with proper funding from the Centre. This Citrus Park in the region will facilitate scientific intervention for conservation, promotion and commercialization of our exotic citrus fruits.