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Title: Issue related to reduction in prices of Black pepper.

ADV. DEAN KURIAKOSE (IDUKKI): Hon. Speaker, Sir, a drastic fall in the price of black pepper is the main concern of farmers in Kerala and especially in my area, which is the maximum pepper-producing region.

Sir, the prices of pepper crashed down in the year 2017 and now, in 2019, it is at Rs. 290. The main reason behind the fall in price is the unlimited import of Vietnamese pepper through Sri Lanka.

Our Directorate General of Foreign Trade issued a notification of MIP for pepper at Rs. 500 per kg. for protecting our domestic farmers and to prevent unlimited import of Sri Lankan pepper. However, it is necessary to strengthen the implementation of MIP in its true spirit. Despite the imposition of MIP at Rs. 500 per kg., our farmers have already expressed their concerns about the increasing rate of import of Vietnamese pepper.

As per the South Asian Free Trade Agreement, Sri Lanka can easily export up to 2,500 tonnes of pepper without any duty. About 8 per cent duty is applicable when the quantity is beyond 2,500 tonnes. It means that Sri Lankan traders can re-export the Vietnamese pepper easily.

Therefore, I urge upon the Government to increase the MIP rate to Rs. 750 per kg. Thank you.

