

Seventeenth Loksabha

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Title: Regarding recently approved mission on Oil Palm-laid.

SHRI PRADYUT BORDOLOI (NOWGONG): The recently approved mission on Oil Palm, seeks to turn the North East region and Andaman and Nicobar Islands into an oil palm hub, ignoring opposition from various stakeholders. While oil palm cultivation may be useful in the short term to reduce edible oil imports, it is not a sustainable strategy. Countries like Malaysia and Indonesia provide precedent to the devastating effects of monoculture oil palm plantations on biodiversity, depletion of water supply and degradation of soil due to substantial chemical input requirements. Such concerns led Sri Lanka to uproot existing oil palm plantations and ban palm oil imports earlier this year. Not only do these proposed plantations stand to destroy forests, but significantly alter social dynamics given the community ownership of lands in the North-East. I urge the Government to reconsider the plan and engage in wider local consultation to ensure the best interests of the respective regions.