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Title : Need to protect the interest of farmers while signing proposed Free Trade Agreement with ASEAN countries.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (MUVATTUPUZHA): The proposed Free Trade Agreement among 'ASEAN' Countries should not be signed by India before ensuring proper protection for Indian farmers and small scale producers. Already there is heavy crash in price of Pepper, Cardamom, Tea, Coffee, Vanilla and several other agricultural produces. The Free Trade between SAARC Countries is one of the reasons. Lot of smuggling through Sri Lanka and other SAARC Countries are also taking place in case of some such produces in Non-SAARC Countries. Free Trade between ASEAN Countries, which is proposed to take place by early next year may tend to put Farmers in further distress. The Government should refrain from being signatory to such an Agreement. This matter should be discussed in detail with all parties who are likely to be affected.