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Title: Reported decision of the Government to import natural rubber in India and reduction of import duty on palm oil.

SHRI N.N. KRISHNADAS (PALGHAT): Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the House to some of the news items that have appeared time and again in the national dailies saying that the Government has decided to import natural rubber into the country without conducting any study regarding the demand and supply situation in the market. No study has been conducted by the Government. We understand that this decision has been taken under compulsion from the Thai Government. There was a discussion between the Commerce Minister of Thailand and our Commerce Minister. It is given to understand that the Thailand Government is compelling us to import natural rubber from Thailand. Due to that compulsion only the Government has decided to import natural rubber into the country without making any study regarding the production and demand in our country. We urge upon the Government not to import natural rubber into the country. If such a decision has been taken by the Government, it should be cancelled. Natural rubber should not be imported into the country.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Francis George associates with the matter.

SHRI K. FRANCIS GEORGE (IDUKKI): There is another matter also I wish to raise, Sir.

Recently, the Government of India announced duty cut on import of palm oil into the country. It was a ten per cent duty cut. I need not say that the price of coconut will be affected by this. The Finance Minister justified this action by saying that there is a demand-supply mismatch as far as edible oils are concerned. Whatever it is, the Government has to think of the interests of the millions of coconut farmers in the country and rethink about this decision that has been taken to impose a duty cut on imported palm oil.

My colleague Shri Krishnadas has pointed out the issue of natural rubber. The Government is entering into a Free Trade Agreement with the ASEAN nations. Thailand, it seems, is insisting on import of rubber from Thailand. Thailand produces 28,33,000 tonnes of rubber and their internal consumption is only 3,30,000 tonnes. There is absolutely no demand-supply mismatch as far as natural rubber is concerned in this country. We have an excess stock of 50,000 tonnes. So, there is absolutely no requirement for import of natural rubber into India. Rubber is the only product which is getting a fair price as far as cash crops in this country are concerned.

MR. SPEAKER: It is already said. No good repeating it.

SHRI K. FRANCIS GEORGE : If rubber from Thailand or any other ASEAN or SAARC nations is imported into our country, Kerala and other southern States will be affected by this decision to import or to make a duty cut on the import of rubber and a duty cut on import of palm oil. I would request earnestly the Government of India to rethink about it and protect the interests of rubber and coconut farmers.[\[KMR9\]](#)

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Karunakaran, you may associate with this.