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Title: Need to take steps to withdraw the proposed ban on arecanut in the country and also declare a rehabilitation package for the arecanut growers.

SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN (KASARGOD): The Union Health Ministry had submitted an affidavit before the Supreme Court recently which may lead to ban on arecanut in the country. Kerala and Karnataka are the largest producers of arecanut with 24% and 47% respectively. In my parliamentary constituency maximum i.e. 65% of high quality arecanut is produced. Six States are producers of arecanut and it contributes crores of rupees towards our economy. Ban on arecanut will worsen the situation by affecting the individual farmers as well as the producer States. Already the condition of arecanut farmers is very pathetic due to crop loss, diseases and fluctuating market price. Thousands of them are in debt trap and many cases of suicide are also being reported. Now when it is time to declare rehabilitation package to save the poor farmers, the Government on the contrary intends to ban the arecanut. Centre should withdraw the said affidavit which is against these farmers especially from Kerala and Karnataka. A special rehabilitation package should be declared by the Central Government for the arecanut growers and method to make value added products from arecanut should be found out.