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Title: Need to set up a Cashew export zone at Ariyalur and a Mangrove Research Centre at Pichavaram in Tamil Nadu.

SHRI M. CHANDRAKASI (CHIDAMBARAM): I would like to highlight the need for improving the infrastructure for welfare of cashew farmers, promotion of cashew-nut-processing industry and for the conservation and development of mangrove forests in my constituency.

In Tamil Nadu, cashew cultivation is the major agricultural activity in the districts of Ariyalur, Cuddalore and Villupuram. In 2011, the cashew crops in about 31,000 hectares were destroyed by the 'Thane-Cyclone'. The uprooted cashew farmers in the affected areas were rehabilitated by the Government of Tamil Nadu.

The climatic conditions in the area are very conducive for production of high-quality cashew nuts. Setting up of a dedicated Institutional mechanism for cashew at Ariyalur on the lines of DCCD, Kochi (Directorate of Cashew and Cocoa Development) would surely be a motivating factor for the cashew farmers in the area. Other supportive measures such as supply of high-yielding varieties to farmers, incentives for expansion of cashew-cultivation and for adoption of new techniques of cultivation, etc are also needed. Further improvement in infrastructure is needed for processing and marketing of cashew nuts, cashew fruits and cashew based food-items. Setting up of a Cashew Exporting Zone at Ariyalur would go a long-way in promoting cashew cultivation and its marketing in this area.

The mangrove forests at Pichavaram in my constituency is of unique nature and it attracts a large number of tourists. The benefit from mangrove forest would be very high, if it is properly conserved and promoted so there is a need for setting up of a Mangrove Research Centre at Pichavaram.

I, therefore, request that concerned authorities in the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Commerce and other concerned ministries to create necessary institutional mechanisms and infrastructure facilities including a Cashew Export Zone at Ariyalur for the promotion of cashew cultivation and for processing of cashew nuts and cashew fruits and also to set up a Mangrove Research Centre at Pichavaram.