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Title: Need to address the problems of jute sector in the country.

DR. RATNA DE (NAG) (HOOGHLY): I wish to bring to the notice of the Government that jute industry is reeling under deep crisis due to reduction in demand of jute goods in the last one year. The sad part is that eight jute mills have closed down. We are witnessing severe production cuts across the country resulting in over one lakh jute workers going jobless. West Bengal contributes more than 80 per cent of the total jute production. In West Bengal, 64 jute mills are operating in organized sector employing three lakh workers and supporting forty lakh jute farmers. Nearly forty lakh farming families and twenty five lakh persons are directly involved in this trade. Twenty three lakh farming families are closely engaged in jute cultivation. Of late, jute and allied fibre sector are facing stiff competition from synthetics. Added to this changing climatic condition, shortage of labourers, non-availability of quality seeds, and steep hike of different agricultural inputs have increased the cost of jute production considerably. I would strongly urge the Ministry of Textiles to go through certain policy decisions taken by it which led to the current crisis and address the issue of requirements for packaging of food-grains and sugar by knowing the exact picture from the representatives of Indian Jute Mills Association. Before taking any decision by the Central Government concerning the jute industry, I would strongly urge the Central Government to consult the Indian Jute Mills Association and all other stakeholders and the West Bengal Government. I would like to request the Central Government to support the cause of the jute industry so that placement of orders and production would increase and closed jute mills in West Bengal reopen.