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Title: Need to set up Cashew Board with Kollam in Kerala as its headquarter.

SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH (MAVELIKKARA): Madam Speaker, I would like to raise a very important issue.

Cashew industry is export-oriented. The setting up of a Cashew Board will help to enhance the production of cashew and its trade. The Cashew Board can help not only in the modernization cashew processing and marketing but also in increasing the production of raw cashew also.

At present, there is lack of adequate support mechanism from the Government to increase the raw cashew production. Like the Coir Board, the Spices Board and the Rubber Board, the Cashew Board is the need of the hour.

The increase in the production of raw cashew will enable us to reduce the import of raw cashew from foreign countries through which foreign currency can be saved.

The condition of the workers who are engaged in cashew industry is precarious, and 94 per cent of the workers are women, of whom almost all are from the socially and economically backward communities. Scheduled Castes constitutes 35 per cent among these workers. Their wages are very low and there is no guarantee of continuous work. The unhealthy working condition makes their life miserable. ...(*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: You make it short. You make your demand.

SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH : Madam, I am making a very important point.

The improved production and marketing will help to improve the quality of life of the people and also help them to earn huge income from foreign countries.

For centuries, Kollam is the centre of cashew processing industries in India. Hence, I would urge upon the Government to set up the Cashew Board immediately.

Madam, the previous UPA Government had agreed to set up the Cashew Board under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

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But the Ministry of Agriculture did not agree. Even the Planning Commission agreed and the Cabinet Sub-Committee also agreed. But the objection was raised by only the Ministry of Agricu/lture. They wanted to set up a Cashew Board under the Ministry of Agriculture.

HON. SPEAKER: Please conclude, now.

You want that the Commission should be there and its headquarters should be at Kollam.

SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH : Yeah.

Madam, the formation of the Cashew Board is held up in the Ministry. I would, therefore, request the Government to set up a Cashew Board at Kollam at the earliest. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER: Kumari Shobha Karandiaje, Shri P.K. Biju, *m04 Shri M.B. Rajesh, Shri P. Karunakaran and *m06 Shri Shankar Prasad Datta are permitted to associate themselves on this issue raised by Shri Kodikunnil Suresh.