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Title: Need to take measures to protect cashew industries from outside competition.

SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN (KOLLAM): Thank you Mr. Chairman Sir. My 'Zero Hour' submission is in respect of cashew industry. Cashew is one of the most labour intensive industries in India. More than ninety per cent of the workers are from rural areas particularly from socially and economically backward sector. Cashew sector is providing employment to more than ten lakh workers. This industry is facing crisis due to the competition from outside. Cashew processing is not included in the highly labour intensive sector. Hence, the workers are not entitled for the benefits and welfare of the high labour intensive sector.

Recently declared foreign trade policy of the Government, duty scrip eligibility for all other nuts except cashew has been retained at five per cent for all country ground codes. But for cashew kernels, it has been drastically reduced to two per cent for country Group Codes A & B and nil for Group C. Considering the competition from Vietnam and West Africa, the present decision of the Government of India adversely affects the cashew export/ cashew processing and thereby cashew industry and more than ten lakh workers in the industry as a whole. Therefore, I urge upon the Government to include cashew industry in the labour intensive sector and in the list of industries eligible interest subvention and also retain duty scrip eligibility at five per cent for cashew also.

Thank you Sir.