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Title: Need to impose restrictions on import of raw cashew nuts.

SHRI N.K. PREMCHANDRAN (KOLLAM) : More than ten lakh employees are working in the cashew industry. 95% of the workers are women from the rural and unprivileged sections in the society. Non-availability of raw cashew is causing crisis in the industry. About 10 laksh tonnes of the raw cashew nuts is imported from African contries and Indonesia. In recent years, the price of imported raw nuts has gone up to an abnormal level, which resulted in shutting down of many factories and adversely affected the life of poor cashew nut workers. The reason behind the abnormal increase in the price of imported cashew nut is the black money used to procure raw cashew nuts from the originating African countries. The traders themselves imported the nuts often under the benami names and sold at much higher price to the processors. Since the volumes are high, considerable sums of money get laundered. An import at very high prices facilitates hawala transactions and this enables huge sums of money to be taken out of the country to be parked in safe havens abroad. Immediate intervention of the Government is required in this matter.

Hence, I urge upon the Government to initiate action to impose such restrictions as deemed fit on the import of raw cashew nuts in to India to put an end to the fraudulent practices so as to protect the cashew industry, cashew workers and economy of the country.

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