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Title: Need for setting up food processing plant for fruits produced in Malda district.

**SHRI ABU HASEM KHAN CHOWDHURY (MALDAHA DAKSHIN):** I would like to draw your attention and the attention of the Government of India to the severe problem being faced in Malda District of West Bengal.

The Malda District is famous for its varieties of mangoes. A lot of people are dependent on the mango crops for their livelihood. At present, the greatest difficulty is marketing.

In the past, our major buyers would come from East Bengal which is now Bangladesh. After Partition, 30 per cent mango growing areas went to Bangladesh. As a result, the Malda District lost its principal market. The mangoes of Malda are now sold mostly in Kolkata or in Assam. What is sold is a very small portion of what is being produced.

The problem of marketing might be solved if a food processing plant is set up in the Malda District. A food processing plant can process mangoes and make varieties of mango products. It can also bring in fruit and vegetable crops such as litchis, pineapples, oranges and tomatoes from northern districts and other surrounding districts. It would generate better incomes for the rural people of North Bengal.