

Regarding problem faced by arecanut farmers in Karnataka

DR. PRABHA MALLIKARJUN (DAVANAGERE): Thank you, hon. Speaker Sir, for giving me this opportunity.

Sir, through you, I wish to draw the attention of the Ministry of Agriculture towards a pressing concern of areca nut farmers, particularly in Karnataka which is the largest producer of this crop. Areca nut is a major commercial crop which is cultivated in more than 10 States across the country. Karnataka alone contributes over 40 per cent of its total production. The crop is grown in more than 15 districts of Karnataka, and my Lok Sabha constituency, Davanagere, also contributes significantly to the production of this crop. Nearly 10 lakh families in Karnataka are directly and indirectly dependent on areca nut cultivation for their livelihood. However, the areca nut growers are facing severe distress due to multiple challenges like high susceptibility to diseases which significantly reduces the yield. Illicit import of areca nut from other countries has also led to a sharp decline in prices. The lack of price stability is also a concern.

Therefore, Sir, I urge the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare to regulate the areca nut prices, impose heavy import duties, and prevent illegal imports to protect farmers. I also request for the establishment of Areca Nut Board like the Makhana Board to ensure price stability, promote research, expand cultivation, and improve marketing for long-term sustainability. Thank you.