

Title: Regarding need to procure copra and to fix minimum support price.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (CHIRAYINKIL): I take this opportunity to bring to the notice of this House as well as the Central Government a very serious matter concerning Kerala.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Only Kerala!

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (CHIRAYINKIL): Not only Kerala, but Lakshadweep and all other coconut growing States as well. It was decided that the Government would declare the Minimum Support Price for copra positively in the month of December. But, so far, the Central Government has not declared the MSP for copra. Now there is no procurement in Kerala. The entire coconut farmers of South India are facing starvation. The price of coconut has come down to Rs.1.50 per piece in certain markets. The procurement agencies are out of the field. They do not have money. The Central Government has not given any direction for procurement. All of them have withdrawn from the scene. The net result is that they would not act.

They have given me the minutes of the meeting held in the Speaker's Chamber some time back. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Your name is there. Please resume your seats. Let him have his say. I will allow you also.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (CHIRAYINKIL): All the MPs representing the States of Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Sir, you yourself representing Lakshadweep met the hon. Speaker and there was a solemn assurance from the Government side that they would come out with the declaration regarding the Minimum Support Price. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I will allow you to associate yourselves; but not now. He has given the notice and let him have his say.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (CHIRAYINKIL): I would request the Government to comply with the decision taken in that meeting....*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Nothing will go on record except the submission of Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan. All of you cannot talk simultaneously and find the recording of your submissions.

(Interruptions) ... (Not recorded)

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (CHIRAYINKIL): You were also a witness to the decision.

(r/1220/ru-hcb)

I request you to ask the Central Government to declare the Minimum Support Price, even at this stage, though it is belated.

SHRI N.N. KRISHNADAS (PALGHAT): Sir, I fully associate myself with Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan on this issue. But I want to add one more point.

There was a meeting in the last Inter-Session in which almost all Members of Parliament from Southern States, hon. Speaker, hon. Deputy-Speaker and many other Members participated. In that meeting, hon. Agriculture Minister assured that Minimum Support Price (MSP) for this year would be declared before 31st December, 2000. But till date, that assurance has not been fulfilled. That assurance has been violated and till today, MSP has not been declared. It is not only this. The procurement of copra is unilaterally stopped by NAFED. This has created a very serious situation in all the coconut-growing areas of South India....*(Interruptions)* I would like to request the Union Government to declare the Minimum Support Price for this year and take steps for procurement of copra....*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shri Thomas, Shri E. Ahamed and all Members from the coconut-growing States are allowed to associate with Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan.

SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH (ADOOR): Sir, the Government should respond to this issue.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Will you please resume your seat, Shri Suresh?

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Members from coconut-growing areas of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka and also Lakshadweep are allowed to associate.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Let me say something, Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan. The hon. Minister is here and he will react to it. Shri Suresh, allow me to speak. I want to say something on this matter. Will you resume your seat now?

...(Interruptions)

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (MUVATTUPUZHA): Sir, it is a very serious issue.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I know that. I am telling you that I know it personally.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (MUVATTUPUZHA): There was an assurance given by the hon. Minister.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shri Thomas, please resume your seat. Let me tell you that I know it directly from NAFED authorities that they need about Rs.160 crore from the Central Government. I contacted the Prime Minister and also the Finance Minister. They are trying to pay it and I want the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs to take the sense of this House seriously because some States are on the verge of starvation. For example, my own State is like that. So, kindly react to this problem.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Sir, I will take up this issue with the Minister for Agriculture with all seriousness which you have expressed.