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Title: Problems being faced by rubber cultivators in Kerala due to recent import policy of the Government.

SHRI LONAPPAN NAMBADAN (MUKUNDAPURAM) : About 92% of the rubber production in India is from Kerala, and of this, about 87% is produced by the marginal farmers. Rubber is an agro industry based product on which about 10 lakh farmers are directly involved, and about 60 lakh farmers are indirectly depended upon.

**19.45 hrs.** (Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan *in the Chair*)

If you look at the capital employment opportunity ratio, you can see that rubber provides 40% employment for one crore rupees, while in the other sectors it is only 10% for one crore rupees. The rubber distribution and processing units in Kerala give the state Government about 50 crores of rupees as sale tax.

It is a fact that, there is a scarcity of about 2 lakh tons of natural rubber in the world market today. In India, we have about 50 thousand tons of surplus stock. The decision to import rubber from Thailand to India, with 20% reduction in import duty, is therefore a decision without any rhyme or reason.

Sir, due to the import of palm oil, the coconut cultivators in Kerala have already been ruined. Due to the fall in prices of various agricultural products, the farmers in Kerala are facing many hardships and the rubber sector was the only farming sector that was holding out some hope for our farmers. If two countries enter into a bilateral trade agreement, it should be done in such a way that the farming sector and the industrial sector of the countries are not destroyed.

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\* English Translation of the Speech originally delivered in Malayalam.

Lakhs of rubber cultivators and those employed in rubber marketing and processing sectors who are spread in 14 districts of Kerala, are in panic today. Therefore, I request, the Centre for timely intervention, and save lakhs of rubber farmers in Kerala, Thank you.