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Title: Need to address the problems of rubber farmers distressed due to steep fall in procurement price of rubber.

SHRI M.I. SHANAVAS (WAYANAD): The farmers across Kerala are under stress and on the path of agitation as there has been a steep fall in the procurement price of rubber due to imports. As the government is aware that rubber is an important cash crop in Kerala cultivated by innumerable small and marginal farmers and their entire source of income comes from it. Under the circumstances, I would urge the union government and the ministry of commerce to take immediate steps to procure more rubber directly from farmers. The Kerala government has decided to take important remedial measures which include procuring directly from growers by paying Re 1 per kg above the open market price. The support scheme will continue till the market price of RSS-Grade 4 rubber touches Rs 171 per kg.

In this context, I would urge the Union government to initiate a joint task committee and chalk out a plan to ensure the local producers are saved from the steep fall in prices and Kerala government must also be consulted before deciding on the quantum and the season of import as Kerala accounts for nearly 90 per cent of rubber production. There must also be an increase in subsidy to 30 per cent relating to rubber plantation from the present 20 per cent with immediate effect. I would further urge the government to consider the demands of more than 12 lakh rubber farmers.