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Title: Impact of import of Palm oil on coconut farmers.

SHRI M.B. RAJESH (PALAKKAD): Thank you, Madam. I would like to draw the attention of this House to an important issue relating to the plight of the coconut farmers in Kerala.

The Government has consistently reduced the customs duty on crude palmolene and palm oil and this has resulted in a huge import of palm oil. It was 70% in 2006 and now it has come down to zero, As a result of this there has been a crash in the prices of coconut. This has badly affected the coconut farmers in Kerela. The Government has also imposed an excise duty on packed coconut oil on the pretext that this is used as hair oil. At the same time, the Government has not imposed any duty on rich men's oils like Olive oil, which is clearly discriminatory and highly objectionable. The proposed ASEAN Free Trade Agreement will also adversely affect Kerala's farmers, including coconut farmers. As per this FTA, customs duty on around 4000 items will be eliminated. This is going to affect the farmers. This will lead to farmers' suicides.

I would like to demand that Government should not proceed with the ASEAN Free Trade Agreement and should raise the customs duty on crude Palmolene and palm oil. I would also like to urge upon the Government to withdraw the excise duty imposed on packed coconut oil.

MADAM SPEAKER: The names of Shri P. Karunakaran and Shri P.K. Biju may be associated with the issue raised by Shri M.B. Rajesh.

श्री तूफानी सरोज (मछलीशहर): अध्यक्ष महोदया, जीरो आवर के लिए हमने भी नोटिस दिया था।...(व्यवधान)

MADAM SPEAKER: I think, we can take it up afterwards.

...(Interruptions)

अध्यक्ष महोदया : जीरो आवर में कुछ को सुबह लेते हैं, शेष को बाद में लिया जाता है।

â€¦(व्यवधान)