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Title: Need to ban the import of arecanut.

KUMARI SHOBHA KARANDLAJE (UDUPI CHIKMAGALUR): The price of arecanut has come down due to import of low quality arecanut. With the objective of curbing the import of arecanut, the Government had increased its minimum import price. However, the Order had not been enforced. It was essential to impose a total ban on the import of arecanut to protect the interests of growers.

Government should implement the recommendations of Gorakh Singh Committee on providing financial assistance to arecanut growers, who were in financial distress owing to the Yellow Leaf Disease (YLD) and fruit rot diseases. The Committee had recommended to the Government to extend loans to arecanut growers who were in financial crisis owing to pest and fungal infections in the plantations. The growers have suffered heavy losses due to fruit rot disease and it has caused extensive damage to arecanut cultivation.

I urge the Union Government that all concerned Departments (Commerce, Health, Revenue and Science & Technology) should take the following remedial measures (i) to include arecanut in the Restricted List of items to avoid duty free import; (ii) to put arecanut under Negative List of imported goods & (iii) to check the imported consignment at CFTRI so as to ensure that it is fit for human consumption - to mitigate the problems being faced by arecanut growers in the country.