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title: Need to take steps to safeguard the interests of Cardamom growers.

**ADV. JOICE GEORGE (IDUKKI):** The cardamom farmers are in deep crisis due to price crash in recent years. However, the Government has not initiated any steps to safeguard the larger interest of the farmers. Cardamom needs to be exempted from the Central Sales Tax (CST) and VAT and delist cardamom from the notified goods. Free trade of the cardamom may be facilitated by bringing necessary amendment to the Spices Board Act and rules made thereunder. It is necessary to introduce bench mark price for cardamom by the Spice Board with sufficient financial allocation to ensure minimum support price. It is also requested to introduce an amnesty scheme for the cardamom growers by way of special package, for the time being, to mitigate the hardship. Steps may be taken to declare moratorium on the agricultural loans of the cardamom growers by exempting the interest portion. Sufficient funds may be provided to give subsidy and other financial support to the cardamom farmers for the developmental activities including replanting and establishing irrigation facilities through Spices Board. Hence, I urge upon the Government to intervene in the matter and take immediate steps to safeguard the interest of the cardamom growers.