

**SPECIAL MENTIONS****Demand for addressing threat posed to domestic *agarbatti* industry by import of *agarbattis* from China and Vietnam**

SHRI HUSAIN DALWAI (Maharashtra): Sir, *agarbatti* is part of India's rich culture and heritage. This industry is a small scale handicrafts-based industry, which employs millions of people across the country.

[THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA) *in the Chair.*]

The backward linkages ensure that some money is transferred to the forest dwellers, particularly those in the North-East through procurement of raw materials such as forest products and bamboo sticks. Since this is a handicrafts industry, it is very labour intensive and typically has lower returns than other industries. However, due to the advent of globalization, this industry faces great threat from Chinese and Vietnamese imports. These products are factory made and are cheaper than the indigenous product. The product is deliberately priced low and floods the market so that the consumer is influenced into buying these *agarbattis*, thus killing the local business and making around two million people unemployed. I have been told that every day around 10-15 containers of *agarbattis* arrive from Vietnam and China. Not only are these imports killing local business, but they are also duping consumers into buying a hazardous product, and cheating the Government of taxes. These imported *agarbattis* and *dhoops* contain a mosquito repellent chemical called Allethrin, and research has stated that prolonged exposure to this is particularly harmful to children. However, the consumer remains ignorant as these are sold under the disguise of lemongrass or citronella, and the packaging does not fully disclose the ingredients. A mosquito repellent is charged an additional 14 per cent tax. However, as mentioned by the Finance Minister, *agarbattis* are fully exempt from excise tax. On the one hand, the Government is emphasizing "Make in India" and on the other hand, such regressive practices are leading to large scale unemployment and health issues while destroying an important traditional industry. I urge upon the Government to take immediate action in this matter.

श्री अविनाश पांडे (महाराष्ट्र): महोदय, मैं स्वयं को इस विशेष उल्लेख से संबद्ध करता हूँ।

हाजी अब्दुल सलाम (मणिपुर): महोदय, मैं स्वयं को इस विशेष उल्लेख से संबद्ध करता हूँ।

SHRI SHANTARAM NAIK (Goa): Sir, I associate myself with the Special Mention made by Shri Husain Dalwai.

DR. BHALCHANDRA MUNGEKAR (Nominated): Sir, I also associate myself with the Special Mention made by Shri Husain Dalwai.

SHRI PALVAI GOVARDHAN REDDY (Telangana): Sir, I also associate myself with the Special Mention made by Shri Husain Dalwai.