

13.01.2017

# Business Standard

## World food prices fall for fifth straight year in 2016: UN FAO

The full year 2016 logged a 1.5% annual drop in the index



World food prices fell for a fifth straight year in 2016 as losses in cereals, meat and dairy outweighed rises in sugar and vegetable oils, the United Nations food agency said on Thursday.

Prices remained stable in December from the month before, according to the Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO) main food price index, which has edged up steadily after hitting a seven-year low in January.

The full year 2016 logged a 1.5 per cent annual drop in the index, which measures monthly changes for a basket of cereals, oilseeds, dairy products, meat and sugar.

December's reading of 171.8 points versus 171.9 points in November resulted from strong gains in vegetable oils and dairy largely offsetting falls ;in sugar and meat, the FAO said.

Sugar prices rose by about a third across the year, despite an 8.6 per cent dip in December that mainly stemmed from a weaker Brazilian real against the dollar and an expected jump in production in Brazil's main sugarcane-growing region.

"Economic uncertainties, including movements in exchange rates, are likely to influence food markets even more ... this year," FAO senior economist Abdolreza Abbassian said.

Cereal prices steadily declined during the year, ending 39 per cent below their 2011 peak.

Vegetable oil prices reached their highest since July 2014 in December. Palm oil rose on low global inventory levels and tight supplies, while soy oil quotations were boosted by the prospect of rising use for biodiesel in North and South America.

## **THE TIMES OF INDIA**

### **Government must compensate farmers, labourers: Activists**



*Representative image.*

AURANGABAD: Social activists on Thursday staged protests here to press for the compensation to the farmers, who have incurred heavy financial losses due to the cash crunch. Under the banner of Shramik Mukti Dal, the group of the social activists including farmers urged that the central government should also waive off farmers' loan. Highlighting the pathetic condition of the farmers, daily wage earners and labourers, the agitators raised slogans in favour of their demands.

Sukhdev Ban, district president of the organisation said that most of the farmers in the region could not sell their crops in the market due to shortage of valid currency notes. "Those who did sell, had to be content with very low price. This has ruined the rural economy in the region and many farmers are struggling to survive," he said, adding that the government should announce special financial aid for the farmers.

"They have no money to carry forward the farming activities which will further deteriorate the rural economy in the coming days. At this point, the farmers cannot repay loan. Apart from this, to give the much needed boost to the rural economy, the government should come out with immediate relief measures," he said.

"Besides farmers, the labourers in unorganised sector are also bearing the brunt of demonetisation. Since the government announced demonetisation, the labourers have lost their jobs. Their dependents need a helping hand from the government," he added.

"The agitators also said that the recent note ban has unearthed a small quantity of black money. Expecting very encouraging results, the entire nation stood behind the government and faced currency shortage for about two months. The nation was expecting that the decision would flush out significant quantity of black money. But it did not happen. The government should now launch effective and full-proof steps to curb black money," he said.

### **In a major step for farmers, land records go digital in state**

Nagpur: Farmers can heave a sigh of relief as CM Devendra Fadnavis on Wednesday launched in Mumbai digitalization of land records. With this 7/12 utara (extract) will be available on a digital platform under Digital India Land Record Modernization Programme (DILRMP) across the state.

Initially, digitally signed 7/12 extracts will be available in two districts — Nashik and Wardha. By March this year land records in every district will be available and can be procured online. Till now land records could be viewed online and for examining their title status but downloads of this documents did not have legal validity as it did not have signature of verifying authority.

Fadnavis also chaired a meeting of ministers, MLAs, MLCs to deliberate on Nanaji Deshmukh Krushi Sanjivani Prakalp where Agriculture minister Pandurang Fundkar, his deputy Sadabhau Khot and officials from World Bank, agriculture department and other departments were present.

The project will be implemented in 15 drought-prone and salt ingress districts including Jalgaon, Aurangabad, Beed, Jalna, Osmanabad, Parbhani, Hingoli, Buldhana, Akola, Amravati, Wardha, Washim, Yavatmal, Nanded and Latur).

# DECCAN Chronicle

## **Telangana: Doubts over cost of Ramdas Lift Irrigation Project**

No transparency in cost escalation of Ramdas Lift Irrigation Project.

No effort from the government has been made to clear the doubts on the cost escalation.  
(Representational image)

**Khammam:** Lack of accountability and transparency over the cost escalation of Bhakta Ramadas Lift Irrigation scheme has given rise to many doubts on the estimates of the project. No effort from the government has been made to clear the doubts on the cost escalation.

The project was designed at a cost of Rs 90.87 crore to lift the water from Palair Reservoir and it is the figure given by the government during laying of the foundation stone by the Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao. It is designed to irrigate 59,000 acres of the lands in Tirumalayapalem, Khammam Rural, Mudigonda, Nelakondapalli and Kusumanchi mandals in Khammam district and Dornakal in Mahbubabad district.



It is estimated that 21 MW water is required to lift 5.5 tmc water from Palair Reservoir in various stages. Minister for road and buildings Tummala Nageswara Rao announced that the cost of the project will be around Rs 590 crore. The statement was made four months back in the presence of collector Lokesh Kumar.

Minister for irrigation T. Harish Rao, who visited the project two months ago, stated that the cost of the project is around Rs 600 crore. There is no attempt to explain why the cost has escalated so many times in a medium irrigation project. The officials erected the motors and pipelines brought to the Dummugudem Lift Irrigation Project, was redesigned later in the Bhakta Ramadas Project. The cost of the motors and pipelines were not explained at any stage and why they were used. Opposition parties made various allegations on the cost of the project.

Chief engineer of irrigation department N. Sudhakar informed that the cost of the project is around Rs 335 crore. He said, “The cost of the project was increased to Rs 125 crore from Rs 90 crore due to redesign of the project.”



He said that the motors worth Rs 32.44 crore, were brought from Rajiv Sagar lift irrigation project. The pipes, numbering 5,500 of 2.5 metre diameter, costing Rs 163 crore, were used. Interestingly, the government has not maintained clarity over the cost of the project at any stage. The details were given only after Opposition parties raised questions about it.

### **Kerala to implement Food Security Act from April**

Kerala said it would ask the Centre to restore the rice quota of the state to 16.50 lakh metric tonne per annum for distribution under PDS.



The state was now able to supply rice and wheat, to persons in Antyodaya Anna Yojana list and priority list category and also to non-priority list group. (Photo: Representational Image)

**Thiruvananthapuram:** Kerala government would start providing food articles to ration card holders across the state under the National Food Security Act from April one.

Process to make the Public Distribution System more transparent had already started and new ration cards would be distributed in March, Minister for Food and Civil Supplies P Thilothaman told reporters in Thiruvananthapuram on Thursday.

He said state would ask the Centre to restore the rice quota of the state to 16.50 lakh metric tonne per annum for distribution under PDS. This would be taken up with the Union Food Minister Ramvilas Paswan during the meeting to be held at New Delhi on January 16, he said. There was a cut in the quantity of rice for the state after National Food Security Act came into force, he said.

The state would get only 14.50 lakh metric tonne in place of 16.50 lakh metric tonne which it was receiving, he pointed out.

Referring to UDF Opposition criticism that PDS in the state has collapsed, Thilothaman said problems in the distribution of food articles through ration shops has ended.

Distribution of ration articles for the last month was expected to be completed by January 14 and supply of articles for the current month has also started, Thilothaman told reporters.

State faced problems in the PDS after there was a reduction in the quantity of food articles following the implementation of National Food Security Act, he pointed out.

However, the state was now able to supply rice and wheat, to persons in Antyodaya Anna Yojana list and priority list category and also to non-priority list group, he said.

Stating that stern action would be taken against corruption, he said officials recovered nearly 100 tone of spoiled rice kept for distribution under PDS from a private mill in Kottayam.

A total of 1.87 lakh metric tonne paddy was procured from 53078 farmers at a price of Rs 22.50 per kg in the first season so far.

Out of a total of Rs 420.76 crore due to farmers under this account, an amount of Rs 184.78 crore was disbursed so far, he pointed out.



### **Monsoon failure strikes paddy growing on TNAU research plot**

**‘This year the yield is expected to be around 1.8 tonnes an acre, in January 2016 it was 3 tonnes**

Harvest of ‘TRY (R) - 3’ variety at a research plot at the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University - Anbil Dharmalingam Agricultural College and Research Institute at Navalur Kuttapattu

near here, is expected to register a marginal fall in yield and also the harvest of the paddy variety is being delayed by a fortnight due to monsoon failure.



Never in the past decade has the college witnessed such a fall in yield. Although the research scholars and faculty members spared no measures to save the paddy crop raised on about 40 cents on the research plot of the campus, the continued drought condition has impacted the crop.

“Normally, the harvest of this variety commences with the ‘Pongal’ festival, but this year, we are forced to postpone the harvest to the end of this month as the crop is yet to register full growth,” said P. Pandiyarajan, Dean of the Institute told *The Hindu* on Thursday.

He said that the variety was released by the Institute about a decade ago and it is specially suited for the alkaline soil or sodic-affected fields where the salt content was severe. In fact, the college was founded in the Manikandam block in the district and this block accounts for 5,000 hectares -- the largest single block with sodic-affected area in the district.

In the initial period, the paddy variety, with a duration of 135 days, registered 2.25 tonnes an acre.



But, this year, the yield is expected to be around 1.8 tonnes an acre, the Dean said. He said that the variety has a milling percentage of 71.30 and head rice recovery was 66 per cent.

The variety was resistant to diseases, including leaf folder, stem borer, brown spot, sheath rot, and sheath blight.

In 2015, the yield per acre stood at 2.4 tonnes and in January 2016, it had shot up to 3 tonnes.

The only solace for scientists and research scholars of the institute is that the achievement had been recorded after a close follow-up on the growth of the plant. “Mild showers during Vardah cyclone brought some hope for rejuvenating the plant but it was short-lived as there was no spell of rain after that,” said G. Subramanian, Head of the Department of Agronomy.

T. Ramesh, Assistant Professor of Agronomy said that peacock menace posed another problem this season.

On the peacock menace, he said that a muster of peacocks assemble in the paddy fields, particularly in the early morning and late evening to eat away the paddy grains.

Research scholars have taken efforts to prevent the growth of weeds in the crop by using herbicide. The crop would be harvested before January 30, according to the Dean.

### **Milk procurement price increased**

In the wake of an increase in the price of fodder because of drought, the Shivamogga Milk Union Limited (SHIMUL), a unit of Karnataka Milk Federation, has announced the enhancement of the price at which the milk is procured by Rs 1.50 per litre.

The new price will come into effect from Thursday. With this, the price at which the SHIMUL procures milk from the farmers has been enhanced from Rs 23.65 to Rs 25.15 per litre. In addition to this, the milk producer will also get Rs. 5 paid by the State government as an incentive for a litre of milk. In all, the milk producers will get an amount of Rs. 30.15 for selling a litre of milk for SHIMUL.

Paddy straw is the main source of fodder for farmers in the region. The Department of Agriculture had set a target of cultivating paddy on 1.08 lakh hectares of land in the district in the kharif season of 2016. However, owing to the sluggish monsoon, paddy was cultivated

only on 1.01 lakh hectares. The paddy cultivated under the rain-fed method in Shikaripur and Sorab taluks was damaged owing to the moisture stress caused by drought.

Owing to scarcity of rain, paddy was not cultivated as a summer crop in the command areas of Bhadra and Tunga reservoirs . This has resulted in the scarcity of fodder. A similar situation prevails in Davangere and Chitradurga districts also that fall under the jurisdiction of SHIMUL.

According to sources, the price of a tonne of fodder that was at Rs. 5,800 last year has increased to Rs. 9,000 now. Jagadeeshappa Banakar, chairman, SHIMUL, said as the cost incurred by milk producers towards fodder has increased, the meeting of the managing committee of the Union held recently decided to enhance the price of procurement of milk.

The SHIMUL procures 4.34 lakh litre of milk daily through its 1,080 milk producers' cooperative societies in Shivamogga, Chitradurga and Davangere districts. Around 65,000 milk producers, who are members of these milk producers' cooperative societies, will be benefited from the decision to enhance the price of milk procurement. Mr. Jagadeeshappa also added that the price at which SHIMUL sells milk and milk produce to its customers will remain unaltered.

### **Harvest of gloom for farmers as forecast indicates crash in crop prices**

#### **Cash crunch following demonetisation has complicated the matter for growers: report**

The coming harvest festival, Sankranti, presents a gloomy picture for farmers as Karnataka Agriculture Price Commission (KAPC) has forecast one of the worst seasons in the last several decades as prices of various crops are likely to plummet.

It is a strange phenomenon as prices are likely to crash even when there is a shortfall in production as against the trend of glut in production triggering a fall in prices, said KAPC chairman T.N. Prakash Kammardi. This situation has arisen as there is a bountiful harvest of various crops because of good rains in other States as well as countries. "Either the cheap crops from other States are entering our markets or there is no demand for our produce in other markets because of glut in their own areas," he said.



## **AFFECTED CROPS**

KAPC report forecasts dip in the prices of jowar, maize, toor, groundnut, and sunflower, and continuation of low prices for potato, tomato, green gram, arecanut, and copra

 **This is one of the worst harvest seasons in decades for farmers in terms of prices. This is owing to a glut in production in other States or countries coupled with the impact of demonetisation.**

— T.N. Prakash Kammardi,  
Chairman, Karnataka Agriculture  
Price Commission

“It is like rubbing salt into the wound of farmers who have already suffered crop losses owing to serious drought or floods as they may have to not only suffer reduction in yield, but also crash in the prices,” notes the *The Perspective and Forecasting* report by the KAPC.

### **Demonetisation adds to woes**

According to the commission’s report, what has complicated the matter is the impact of demonetisation. “This has prevented the recovery of prices of some crops besides leading to a dip in the price of others owing to poor cash flow in the markets,” Dr. Kammardi said.

The commission’s report has pointed out that the prices of tomato and onion have crashed by 84 per cent and 70 per cent respectively, when compared with the earlier level; and that of copra and arecanut have seen a dip of 47 per cent and 7 per cent respectively after demonetisation.

The commission has suggested to the State government to take up the issue with NABARD as well as the Union government to increase the daily money withdrawal limit for farm traders in agricultural produce marketing committees (APMC) in the interest of farmers.

Pointing out that the norms related to monetary withdrawal limits from banks were relaxed for tea growers of some areas, Dr. Kammardi sought similar benefit to be extended to APMCs as nearly 41 per cent of the trading of farm produce takes place in these markets.

### **Only 32 p.c. of affected farm land insured**

Only 32 per cent of the land where agricultural crops were lost either because of drought or floods has been covered under crop insurance scheme in Karnataka in the present financial year, according to a report by Karnataka Agriculture Price Commission.

Expressing concern over the situation, the commission has stressed the need for increasing the crop insurance coverage to protect farmers against vagaries of nature. The total extent of coverage is even lower as only 14 per cent of the total number of farmers in the State have been covered under the scheme.

The report observed non-compliance of the norm that makes it mandatory for all farmers who have taken farm loans to enrol themselves under the crop insurance scheme.

Of the 46 lakh farmers who have taken loans in the present financial year, only 8.34 lakh have been covered under the insurance scheme, the report notes.

### **Surviving the drought**

ironically on the eve of the harvest festival of Pongal, is an important step to address the agrarian distress that is sweeping the State following poor rainfall during the northeast monsoon. Even with relatively better governance structures, desperation among farmers has resulted in a spate of suicides, particularly in the Cauvery delta rice belt that has received little water from Karnataka in recent times. An official declaration of drought brings relief: postponement of loan recovery, waiver of land tax and alternative employment through schemes such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. The



challenge now is to infuse confidence among farmers that the government is fully behind them. As agriculture scientist M.S. Swaminathan has pointed out, there is a need to look ahead and institute reforms in drought management for effective distress mitigation. These should be founded on a participatory approach, one that intensively engages the farm community year-round. A monsoon management centre drawing upon the expertise of multiple departments would, for instance, help use scarce resources conservatively during a drought, and maximise their potential in good times. It is also crucial to preserve the health of cattle and other livestock, as they tend to suffer irreparable harm during drought, with cascading effects on their future productivity. The Centre should provide all support to achieve this under the National Disaster Response Fund and the Prime Minister's crop insurance scheme.

The importance of welfare support for small and marginal farmers cannot be overstated, given the vagaries of the monsoon. More than a decade ago, the National Commission on Farmers pointed out that successive droughts, illness, high expenditure on social obligations and asset loss push farmers to the brink. Yet, not much has changed in the management of drought from the low-budget practices of the colonial era, as the *Swaraj Abhiyan* case in the Supreme Court last year revealed. No more time can be lost in making the administrative system for agriculture responsive to today's needs. The Centre has to ensure that the Drought Management Manual is updated to reflect farmers' concerns, chiefly, giving weightage to the amount of rainfall deficit and declaring a drought without delay. In Tamil Nadu, excessive reliance on water-intensive rice cultivation, and lower priority for hardy millets have raised the risk for many farmers. Active recharging of groundwater and harvesting of surface water are vital to meet the challenges.

## **Kerala seeks bigger role in managing marine resources**

### **Crucial meeting on fisheries policy today**

The Kerala government will exert pressure on the Centre for a greater say in the administration, regulation and management of marine fisheries resources. A meeting of State fisheries ministers convened by the Union Ministry of Agriculture on Friday is slated to discuss the draft national policy on marine fisheries that was formulated after several rounds

of discussions with stakeholders. The State Government has deputed Principal Secretary, Fisheries, James Varghese to attend the meeting.

Fisheries Minister J. Mercykutty Amma said Kerala would press for decentralised management of fisheries, a nation-wide ban on juvenile fishing and a freeze on the Letter of Permit scheme that allows foreign trawlers to operate in Indian waters.

The State is also seeking extension of its territorial rights from 12 to 36 nautical miles and licensing rights for wireless equipment to be installed in fishing vessels. “Most of the suggestions submitted by the State have not been taken into account in the draft policy,” she said.

Meanwhile, official sources said three major provisions in the draft policy were reportedly removed after the document was published online.

### **Concurrent list**

These include the proposal to bring fisheries into the concurrent list, create a separate ministry for fisheries and prescribe minimum standards for fishing vessels.

Based on a long-standing demand from maritime States, the proposal to include fisheries in the concurrent list was finalised after several rounds of consultations with stakeholders. Currently, the territorial zone extending up to 12 nautical miles from the coast comes under the State list while the fishing zone from 12 to 200 nautical miles is administered by the Centre, often leading to jurisdictional conflict on many issues.

### **Separate ministry**

The idea of a separate fisheries ministry was conceived to ensure better focus and management of the sector that involves the livelihood of a large segment of the population.

Currently, the Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries (DADF) comes under the Agriculture ministry. Standardisation of fishing vessels has also been a long-pending demand by fishers.

The Minister said Kerala would resist any move to dilute key provisions in the draft policy that would affect the traditional sector.

## **Sugar prices soar to 7-year high in Maharashtra**



Drought shrinks cane supplies; output seen declining 40%

Mumbai, January 12:

Sugar prices in Maharashtra, the second largest producer of the sweetener, hit a seven-year high of ₹4,020 a quintal on Thursday on back of strong demand and weak supply in the wholesale market.

Sugar production in the State is expected to fall 40 per cent to five million tonnes (mt) this season (started October last year) against earlier prediction 6.27 mt.

A good monsoon after two years of subsequent drought-like situation in the State has hit sugarcane output in Ahmednagar, Amravati, Nanded and Aurangabad.

Some of the sugar mills in Kolhapur, Sangli, Satara and Pune, which were not impacted by drought, are crushing at almost similar levels like last year.

Of the 170 sugar mills in Maharashtra, only 147 have started operations and among them 32 mills have already stopped production in just 30-40 days due to cane shortage and increasing production costs. As of December 31, the State has produced 2.52 mt of sugar against 3.37 mt in the same period last year. Despite expectation of higher production in Uttar Pradesh, sugar output this season may drop below consumption levels for the first time in seven years. India is expected to produce 22.5 mt this season much below the annual demand of 25 mt.

However, the ample carry-forward stocks will help the country meet local demand.

Veeresh Hiremath, Research Analyst, Karvy Comtrade, said most of the stockists have offloaded their inventory after the government imposed stock limit last year and lowering import duty may also not help as globally prices are firm.

“With prices firming up stockists are very cautious and are not building up inventory expecting government to impose stock limits again,” he said.

There are unconfirmed news that government may ban futures trading in sugar to cool down spot prices but that will not have much impact as the fundamentals are pushing up prices, he added.

Debt-ridden sugar mills have preferred to keep their mills shut rather than taking fresh debt to buy raw material. Cane prices have risen by 59 per cent over the last five years, increasing the overall production cost significantly.

The Centre has already warned that it would keep a close tab on retail sugar prices and will not let it move above ₹40 a kg. With the UP elections round the corner, the government may take immediate decision to arrest spike in prices.

The fact that government may cut import duty from the current level 40 per cent to increase domestic supply has led to more uncertainty. Globally too, sugar prices have gone up due to lower output expected in Brazil and Thailand.

**‘Improving milk quality and consumer awareness is a big challenge’**





Schreiber Dynamix Dairies Pvt Ltd (SDDPL) inaugurated a ₹250-crore infant nutrition ingredient plant at Baramati on Thursday.

SDDPL, in which the US-based global dairy giant Schreiber Foods holds a majority stake, has invested over \$100 million in the past decade in expanding its operations with facilities at Baramati, Fazilka and Kuppam. The company, which contract manufactures value-added products such as cheese, yogurt, juices and powders for customers such as Abbott, Britannia, Coca-Cola and Danone, among others, has an annual turnover of over \$250 million.

Mike Haddad, President & CEO, Schreiber Foods, who inaugurated the new plant and dryer facility at Baramati, told *BusinessLine* in an e-mail interaction that improving milk quality and awareness of the consumer is the company's biggest challenge in India. Excerpts:

**How do you assess the Indian market? Any plans to further expand your procurement mechanism to other States?**

The processed food market and organised dairy is at a nascent stage and looking at the demographics in India this is a growing market waiting to explode. We have set up a dairy in the South in Kuppam and are now setting up a procurement base. This will help us in expanding in the South.

**Do you have any plans to use India as a sourcing base for the overseas market?**

Our aim is to cater to the Indian markets.

As and when the opportunity arises, we will export to other countries. We have a strong customer base outside India.

**Any plans to launch your own brands in the Indian market?**

We are positioned as a customer brand company and will continue to do that.

Currently, we have no plans to pursue our brands in the market.

**How do you see the global demand-supply scenario in the dairy segment? Where are prices headed?**

We are seeing some uptick in prices, which may continue for some time.

**What are the challenges you see in the Indian market?**

Milk quality and the quality consciousness of the Indian consumer is our biggest challenge. We need all the dairy players to improve quality and work towards improving milk quality.

**What are your investment plans for the Indian market?**

We invest in plants based on customer requirements. Cost effectiveness and quality products are our strength.

We will continue to respond to customer requirements whenever they arise.

**Any plans to increase your stake in SDDPL?**

Currently, there are no such plans.

**How is your non-dairy business (juice and beverage) scaling up in India?**

We are growing 10-15% in this business and we expect this growth to continue for the next few years.

**Ministry leaning towards second generation ethanol from agri waste: Pradhan**

Coimbatore, Jan 11:

The Petroleum and Natural Gas Ministry is gearing up to move towards second generation ethanol from agriculture waste.

Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of State – Independent Charge, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, said the country is moving heavily towards ethanol blended fuel, although for the present, it is committed to procuring from sugar industries.

“Nevertheless, we are also contemplating second generation ethanol from agriculture waste, ethanol from rice straw, from different biodiversity, through chemical processes and using alternative technology.

“Incidentally, towards this move, we laid the foundation for one such plant in Punjab on December 25. We are planning 11 more such pilot plants in different parts of the country, including one in Tamil Nadu,” he said in reply to a query.

The Punjab project is expected to become operational in two years, he said without further elaboration.

“This will help tide over the deficit in ethanol supply from the sugar industry. We can blend up to 10 per cent, but the supply of ethanol from sugar mills is just 5–6 per cent of the requirement,” he said.

### **Cooking oils slip on weak buying**



Mumbai, January 12:

Edible oils witnessed a slightly weak trend as physical demand was low amid bearish overseas futures. On the BCE, groundnut further declined by ₹20 per 10 kg. Soyabean and cotton oil lost ₹5 each.

Palmolein was up ₹1. Liberty's rates: palmolein ₹635, super palmolein ₹656 and soyabean refined oil ₹730. Ruchi traded sunflower oil for ₹710. Allana's rates: palmolein ₹635, soya refined oil ₹725, sunflower refined oil ₹715. At Rajkot, groundnut oil *telia* tin declined to ₹1,465 (1,480) and loose (10 kg) was at ₹940 (930).

## **Pepper arrivals down, prices steady**

Kochi, January 12:

Pepper arrivals continued to witness a shrinkage despite it is being the peak harvesting time of the season. Hence the activities remained limited. Market sources told *BusinessLine* that normally 30 tonnes used to arrive daily at this time of the season in the past.

On the terminal market, only eight tonnes arrived and were traded at ₹650-670 a kg. Spot prices remained unchanged at ₹65,900 (ungarbled) and ₹68,900 (garbled) a quintal. January and February contracts on the IPSTA stayed steady at ₹70,000 and ₹67,000 a quintal. Export prices were at \$10,475 a tonne c&f for Europe and \$10,725 for the US.