

AWAITING SUNNY DAYS

Pepper farmers are currently facing the lowest price in Kerala. The market price in Kochi is ₹340 per kg while the previous year had registered a price of around ₹700 during the June-August period. With these months being considered as off-season for pepper, the price would normally increase up to ₹600. This year, various stockists and local traders collected pepper from farmers at ₹500 per kg to sell at a higher price during the off-season. "I collected 800 kg pepper from local farmers at ₹500 per kg. Dealers from Mattanchery are the main buyers for me. Currently, they are not ready to pay a higher price as pepper from Malaysia is easily available in the market at a lower price," Kurien George, a pepper trader from Central Travancore. With pepper prices decreasing due to heavy imports, the Union Government had imposed various regulations for the import of pepper. The notification issued in March 2018 by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade, under the Commerce Ministry, said the import of pepper and its derivatives should be priced ₹500 per kg. The import licence of those failing to follow the regulations stand to be suspended, as per the notification.



A tribal woman in Kunjippara at Kuttampuzha panchayat, in Ernakulam, sifting pepper