

# Centre says measures in place to check price rise

Govt. has extended export restrictions on sugar, wheat and rice to ensure adequate supply in domestic market; moreover, 50 lakh tonnes of wheat will be offloaded, says Union Food Secretary

**The Hindu Bureau**

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**U**nion Food Secretary Sanjeev Chopra said here on Thursday that the Centre had taken adequate measures, including extension of restrictions on exports of sugar, wheat, and rice, to ensure that the prices of these essential items did not increase further and remained stable during the festival season.

Mr. Chopra said the 20% export duty on parboiled rice would remain till March 31, 2024, to maintain adequate availability in the domestic market. He said the measure had led to a decline in export of parboiled rice by 65% in quantity terms and 56% in value terms. The export of broken rice was prohibited and an export duty of 20% was imposed on non-basmati white rice in September last year. Subsequently, export of non-basmati white rice was prohibited in July this year. "The pur-



**Grain of the matter:** Harvested paddy being dried outside a mill in Palakkad on Thursday. K.K. MUSTAFAH

pose of extending the duty regime on parboiled rice is to keep a check on price rise of this crucial staple and maintain adequate availability in the domestic market," Mr. Chopra said.

## **25 lakh tonne offloaded**

On wheat, he said the Centre had decided to offload 50 lakh tonnes under the Open Market Sale Scheme (domestic) through e-auction.

The Food Corporation of India sells two lakh

tonnes of wheat every week and so far 25.6 lakh tonne has been offloaded. Cooperative agencies NAFED and NCCF as well as Kendriya Bhandar is selling *atta* in the open market at ₹ 27.50 a kg, he said. "These measures have led to increased availability of wheat in the domestic market and moderated retail and wholesale prices in wheat in the country," he said.

The retail inflation in wheat is about 3.6% in one

year, the Centre said. Mr. Chopra was confident that edible oil prices would also be stable. "Prices are expected to remain stable during the festival season. We are not anticipating any manner of hike in the festival season. It's hoped that prices should rule stable in the next couple of months," Mr. Chopra said. The government had also decided to extend the restriction on export of raw, white, refined and organic sugar indefinitely.