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CM promises licence to more neera units

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: Chief Minister Oommen Chandy has given assurance to accord permission to produce neera to more coconut producers' federations. He announced that the government would release funds promised under the neera production scheme. Mr. Chandy was distributing licences to over 100 CPFs at a function held here on Friday.

Calling the project as the most satisfactory one implemented during his tenure as CM, Mr. Chandy said Kerala used to face financial trouble whenever the farm-based economy was down. The production of neera promised good prospects to farmers. There were farmers who could fetch upto Rs.3,000 per palm a month from neera tapping. The Chief Minister congratulated the efforts undertaken by Coconut Development Board Chairman T.K. Jose in bringing about a revolutionary change in the sector. He distributed subsidy for the neera producing plants.

Excise Minister K. Babu said the amendment to the 112-year-old Abkari Act to facilitate tapping of neera was done despite opposition from traditional toddy tappers. Excise department, along with Coconut Development Board, would hold control over the production and processing activities as there was a chance for the produce acquiring alcoholic properties if not done with right procedures. The federations would have the responsibility to follow procedures to guard against fermentation within four to six hours of production of neera, which could render the product alcoholic.

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