

# Kerala approves tapping sweet toddy from coconut

## State Govt to launch pilot project, amend laws on liquor sale

**Our Bureau**  
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The Kerala Government has given its nod for tapping *neera* or unfermented sap from coconut across the State. Neera, sweet toddy that is a non-alcoholic drink, is got from the immature inflorescence of coconut.

A decision in this regard was taken at the stakeholders meeting convened by State Excise Minister K. Babu in Thiruvananthapuram.

The move could prove handy for the ailing coconut sector.

*Neera* tapping will be done in units of 1,500 coconut trees in each district across the State initially as a pilot project, it was decided at the meeting.

In Kollam, Pathanamthitta and Thiruvananthapuram

districts, where no toddy tapping is taking place now, more than one unit will be allowed to tap *neera*.

The Abkari laws that govern sale of liquor would be amended for production of *neera*, the Minister told the meeting.

The Minister pointed out that permission for producing *neera* would be given only to companies and federation affiliated to the Coconut Development Board.

Toddy tappers would be given preference to tapping coconut tree for *neera*.

Besides, *neera* technicians would be given membership in the Toddy Tappers Welfare Fund Board, the Minister said.

A committee appointed by the Kerala Government had



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recommended allowing tapping of *neera* with regulations.

The committee was constituted to study the possibil-

ities and prospects of starting *neera* business in Kerala.

Moreover, the Coconut Development Board has been

demanding for long that *neera* production be started to help revive the coconut sector.

The inclusion of this in the Kerala Abkari Act had led to misconceptions about Neera, thereby limiting its tapping in the State.

The Board was of the view that *Neera* should be within the purview of the Abkari Act as it is unfermented sap containing no alcohol.

The technological advances made in the processing and packaging of Neera ensure that it remains a zero alcoholic drink.

It also suggested starting *neera* tapping and production, processing and packaging under the auspices of Federations of Coconut Producers Societies.

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