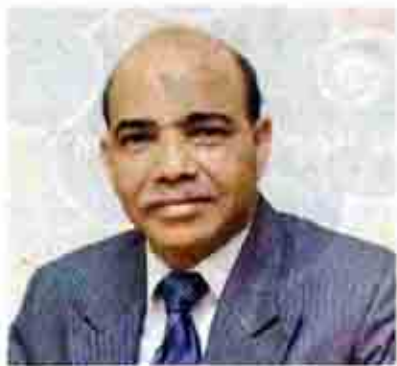


# FACT looking to market neera, pokkali rice

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**KOCHI:** Fertilizers and Chemicals Travancore (FACT), looking to augment cash flow in the short-term through a slew of diversified activities, is in negotiations with the State government to take up marketing of neera, among other products and produce.

The negotiations are at their initial stages but FACT hopes to clinch a deal with the government, which is on the verge of opening up tapping of neera, the sweet, unfermented sap from coconut flowers as a wellness drink. The state Cabinet has in principle approved handing



**CMD of FACT**  
Jaiveer Srivastava

over neera tapping to authorised entities. FACT will use its chain of 8,000 dealers across South India to market neera in the domestic market. "We are also looking to export the drink", said the

chairman and managing director of the public sector fertilizer company Jaiveer Srivastava here on Friday.

He said that the fertilizer company was also in talks with farmers' groups to market pokkali rice using FACT's network.

Pokkali, a local variety of salt-resistant rice, is organically grown and is in great demand across the State. However, the lack of a proper marketing network has resulted in farmers selling the produce at throw-away prices.

FACT has so far confined its marketing activities to fertilizer produced at its plants in Kochi and to im-

ported items like urea. However, the company now planned to import even complex fertilizers, test them for quality, and market them under its brand.

The Union Fertilizer Ministry has backed FACT's plans to increase trading activities with a Rs. 250-crore letter of comfort to MMTC, Mr. Srivastava said.

The company has already imported 25,000 tonnes of complex fertilizer to be marketed.

"The trademark twin elephants on the logo of FACT is loved and trusted by people in South India", said Mr. Srivastava to emphasise his point that the company had

a brand identity built over the past 70 years.

Marketing is an area in which FACT has long-standing expertise and the company management is optimistic about it contributing to greater money flow as it looked for a sustainable solution to FACT's long-standing problems.

The management and employees are visualising FACT's destiny over the next 20 to 25 years.

"But we have to first help ourselves and then seek help from the government", said Mr. Srivastava about a number of projects that are before the Union Fertilizer Ministry's consideration.