

Major boost to toddy sector

Government constituting Toddy Board

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KOLLAM: A Toddy Board, with a share capital of Rs.1 crore, is being constituted by the State government as part of a move to revive the sinking toddy sector of the State.

The decision was notified on June 22. The new board will be constituted with the Secretary (Taxes) as chairman and the Excise Commissioner as member. The Kerala State Beverages Corporation has been directed to provide the share capital.

The government has also notified the much-awaited decision to grant Neera tapping licence to all applicants in the State. District-level excise deputy commissioners have been directed to issue the licence. Traditional toddy tappers will get preference for tapping Neera. The notification says that out of 362 coconut production societies registered with the Coconut Development Board (CDB) for Neera tapping, only 173 have been given the licence. The remaining applicants will be given the licence later. The CDB will be the prime marketing agency for Neera pro-



The Coconut Development Board's Neera outlet at Vytilla Mobility Hub in Kochi. - PHOTO: VIPIN CHANDRAN

duced in the State. While each coconut producers society has been given permit to tap 1,500 coconut palms for Neera, the limit is now raised to 5,000 palms.

Training

A uniform curriculum for training of Neera technicians (workers with permit to tap

Neera) has been notified and the one to be followed will be the standard curriculum for the purpose prepared by the CDB. The expense for training each person as Neera technician carries a subsidy of Rs.10,000. An allocation of Rs.12 crore has been made for the purpose.

In a statement, Shajahan

Kanjiravilayil, chairman of the Consortium of Coconut Producing Companies in Kerala, welcomed the government moves.

He said the decisions were taken on the basis of discussions Chief Minister Oommen Chandy had with coconut producers and top officials on May 18.