

# Neera plant to open at SCMS next month

## Express News Service

**Kochi:** A state-of-the-art Neera processing pilot plant, supposedly a first in the private sector in the country, will be commissioned this August. The processing plant is an initiative of SCMS Institute of Bioscience and Biotechnology Research and Development (SIBB R&D), a member of SCMS Group of Educational Institutions.

The state government has granted one year permission for the production of Neera in association with the Coconut Development Board, Government of India, SCMS Institute authorities said.

The institute has fulfilled its objectives using financial aid from the CDB.

At the same time, the State Excise Department has also released NOC to tap Neera from 250 coconut trees in the Ernakulam district. SCMS Research Institute is the first institution in the country which develops Coconut Neera drink and its add-on products like Neera honey, Neera sugar and Kera Nutri Vita, a highly-nutritious protein powder for the infant and the old. The plant is located at Vidya Nagar near Cusat, South Kalamasery at Ernakulam District. GPC Nayar, chairman, SCMS Group said the

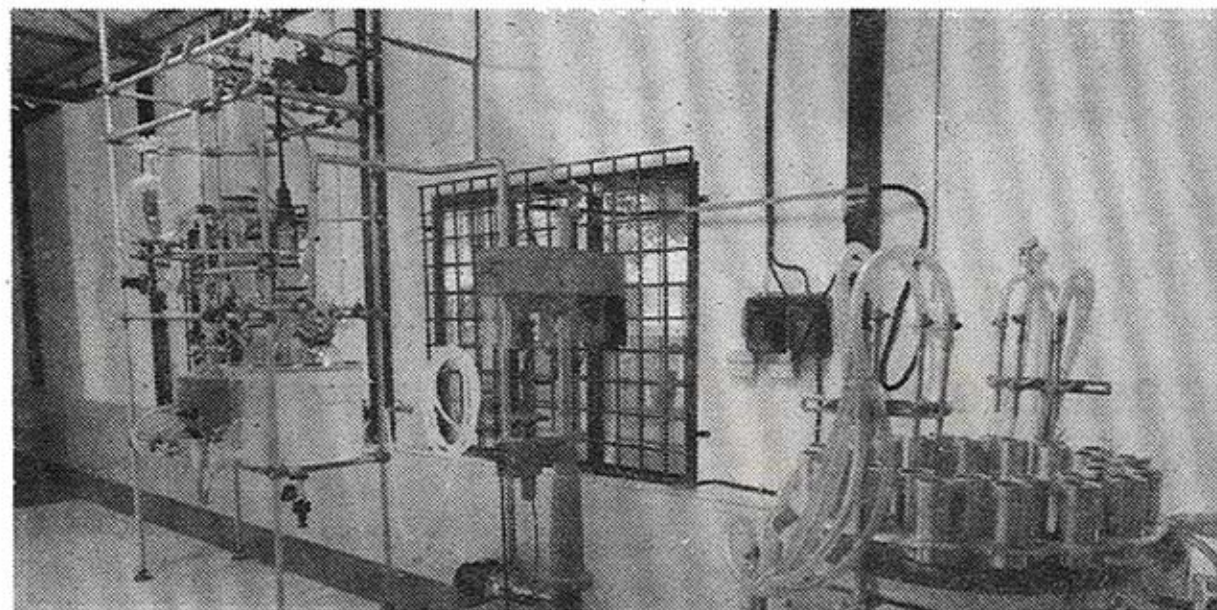
trial run has started. "The plant is working very well, fulfilling all parameters. The production capacity of the plant will be 1000 litres a day of Neera drink and bi-products. The latest technology well ensures that the functions of the machineries will be highly hygienic," he said.

SCMS has received the patent for the project.

The drink can be preserved for three months at normal temperature. C Mohan Kumar, senior scientist and director of SCMS Research Institute (SIBB R&D) led the team on the project. The project was officially launched by Chief Minister Oommen Chandy on March 2 this year. SCMS conducted Neera training camps for Neera tappers selected from all over the state. Trained tappers were offered jobs in Neera plants.

"The Neera production initiative launched by SCMS will lead to the rehabilitation of jobless toddy tappers in the state and enhancement of income of low earning coconut farmers. The coconut farmer will get ₹300 a month for lending one coconut tree for tapping which is a 'boon' to the coconut farmers in the state," C Mohankumar said.

The farmer's federation will distribute the products in the market.



**The Neera processing plant at SCMS Institute of Bioscience and Biotechnology Research and Development**