

Liquor Ban in State a Shot in the Arm for Coconut Sector

by A Satish

Palakkad: The impending closure of bars and setting up of processing plants for Neera production in many districts by coconut producer companies have resulted in a spurt in the income of coconut farmers in the state.

The rent for a coconut tree for being leased for toddy tapping, for one month, has been raised to ₹450 to ₹500 per tree from ₹350, said Thankaraj Gounder of Mulakad in Meenakshipuram, Palakkad, whose trees are being tapped for the Kozhikode range.

The new tapping season for which the Excise Department is issuing licences for six months starting from October 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015. Around 2.5 lakh litres of toddy is transported from Chittur on a daily basis to 11 districts in the state except Kannur and Thiruvananthapuram. There are 778 inter-division permits issued to abkari contractors of other districts and 2,48,892 litres of toddy is being transported on a daily basis.

As per the records secured from the Excise division office here, tree tax is being collected from 1,65,928 trees. The trees are numbered on

TODDY IS TRANSPORTED DAILY FROM PALAKKAD TO 11 DISTRICTS IN THE STATE

Inter division permits	778
Inter division trees	1,65,928
Quantity transported daily to other districts	2,48,892 litres
Inter range permits	244
Inter range trees	44,355
Toddy transported within the district	66,532 litres



the basis of inter division permits issued.

The tax is being collected by the department at the rate of ₹30 per tree for six months. As many as 1,65,928 trees are being tapped for the toddy shops in other districts.

There are 13 ranges in Palakkad district. A total of 244 inter-range permits have been issued by the Excise Department. The tax remitted for inter range transportation within the district are for 44,355 trees from which 66,532 litres of toddy is being transported.

'No Palms'

Meanwhile, district secretary of Kallu Chethu Thozhilali Federation K Sivan said that earlier, toddy was tapped from both palm trees and

coconut trees, but now there are no palms as most of them have fallen. Moreover, the workers are unwilling to climb the palms.

Excise officials who did not want to be named said that vigil has been stepped up at the borders of the district to prevent spurious liquors from being produced in the groves for being transported to other districts as the demand for toddy is certain to increase in the coming days.

Inspections are also being conducted in the toddy shops to assess the number of workers in each shop, their identity cards, the number of trees being tapped under it, the registration of the workers in the Welfare Board and the sales registered on each day at the shop.