

Neera licence for more coconut federations

Special Correspondent

KOCHI: Coconut farmers in the State have received a New Year gift from the State Excise Department in the form of neera-tapping licences for 173 farmers' federations.

The order can translate into jobs for between 26,000 and 30,000 neera technicians, said T.K. Jose, chairman of the Coconut Development Board, on Wednesday. He was addressing a meeting of leaders of the 173 coconut farmers' federations here. The federations have been issued licences through an order on December 7. The first order for neera tapping was issued on May 13, 2014. However, the order

Between 26,000 and 30,000 neera technicians to benefit.

wrongly said that the licences were being issued to "societies" instead of "federations."

A total of 308 federations have been registered with the Coconut Development Board under 14 coconut producer companies across the State. Over 65 federations have already been given licences to tap neera and the board had made a plea to Excise Minister K. Babu to consider the applications for licences by the other federations too.

The Minister had, at the recent launch of neera and nee-

ra derivatives of the Thirukochi Coconut Producer Company, assured the farmers that a decision on the issue of fresh licences would be taken at the earliest.

Mr. Jose said that with the issue of licences to 173 federations, sufficient neera would reach the market. He also suggested that neera and neera derivatives would stand in good stead to compensate coconut farmers who may face a price-fall.

He said that the six federations in Idukki, Pathanamthitta, and Wayanad could form a mini coconut producer company and these federations could activate neera business in cooperation with their neighbouring districts.