

# Neera plant inaugurated

## Coconut farmers told to focus on value-addition

Special Correspondent

**ALAPPUZHA:** Coconut farmers should focus more on product diversification and quality of the value-added products, said Home Minister Ramesh Chennithala. He was inaugurating the neera plant set up by Karappuram Coconut Producer Company Limited at Ayyappanchery here on Friday. The farmer producer companies should concentrate more on bringing out quality products, which would help them get an easy entry into international markets.

The Minister lauded measures taken by Coconut Development Board and the

• **Plant would be a model for other units: CDB chief**

• **Plant set up at a cost of Rs. 1.5 crore**

Department of Excise for making the neera project successful. Both the State and Central governments were supporting the coconut farmers, he said.

T.K. Jose, chairman of the CDB, said the plant set up by Karappuram company would be a model for all the other neera plants expected to come up in the country. Tho-

mas Isaac, A.M. Arif, and P. Thilothaman, MLAs; P.K. Mani, CEO, Karappuram Coconut Producer Company; U. Prathibahari, president, Alappuzha panchayat; Suresh Richard, District Excise Deputy Commissioner; and Shajahan Kanjiravilayil, chairman, Consortium of Coconut Producer Companies, were among those present.

The neera plant, with a capacity of 2,500 litres per day, has been set up at a cost of Rs. 1.5 crore, of which Rs. 70 lakh has been collected from the farmer producer societies. The company aims at making value-added products such as neera sugar, honey, vinegar, chocolate and syrup.