

Neera offers windfall for migrant workers



Anarol Abdul Razak from Assam, a technician with a Neera production company in Kollam, earns a monthly income of Rs.44,000.

With the average monthly income of a Neera technician pegged at Rs.20,000, it offers a part-time employment potential for students. Kerala is proving to be the magnet for migrant labour in an emerging sector. Workers from other States are slowly and steadily establishing their dominance in the Neera production sector in Kerala, even as the Coconut Development Board (CDB) is finding it difficult to find takers from the local population for an immediate requirement of over 2,00,000 Neera technicians. In the absence of trained tapping workers, entrepreneurs who had turned to Neera production are finding it difficult to meet the growing demand from the market, a report by the board says. Highlighting the potential of the Neera sector, a CDB pressnote cites the example of Anarol Abdul Razak from Assam, a technician employed at a Neera production company operating from Kaipuzha in Kollam who earns a monthly income of Rs.44,000. The company employs as many as 30 other workers from Assam, Chhattisgarh, and Tamil Nadu. The pressnote says an eight-week training course for Neera technicians conducted by the CDB offers placement. A batch of 25 workers from Chattisgarh have completed training and are currently employed as Neera technicians at Perambra. Another batch of 28 workers from Nepal is undergoing training in Kozhikode.

The CDB says coconut producers' societies are reporting increased earnings through the export of Neera and value-added products to Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Malaysia. The paucity of labour, however, is a stumbling block to their efforts to tap the market.

The report says the demand for Neera technicians in Kerala is expected to go up to 10 lakh if 10 per cent of the coconut palms in the States are tapped. With the average monthly income of a technician pegged at Rs.20,000, it offers a part-time employment potential for students. The CDB is also exploring means to attract women to the Neera sector as tapping workers.

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