

Neera turns out to be a culinary delight at Iftar

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KOCHI: Neera turned out to be the surprise star at an Iftar party organised by the Malappuram Coconut Producer Company on Saturday, a development seen as signalling a widespread acceptance for the unfermented sap from coconut flowers.

“This is a welcome development, and throws

open the doors for Neera producers in the State to explore export opportunities, especially to the Gulf countries,” T.K. Jose, Chairman of the Coconut Development Board, said. The board had initiated the process of forming coconut producer societies nearly two years ago to launch a business, which it said, had the potential to earn about

Rs.10,000 crore a year for the coconut farmers in the State.

Licences for neera tapping began to be issued early this year by the Excise Department after amendments to Abkari rules. Coconut producer companies in Palakkad, Kannur, Kollam, Thrissur, Kozhikode, and Malappuram are producing Neera. Neera was well-

received and there was appreciation for the drink. The event succeeded in telling the gathering that Neera was a drink without alcohol content. It was well-received at the Iftar party during which religious scholars addressed the gathering, he said.

Mr. Jose said there was some apprehension initially about how the drink would be viewed.