

## REVIVING NEERA

**N**eera, a coconut water-based non-alcoholic drink, is set to make a comeback in the state. The government has decided to amend the Excise Act, which prohibits the ban on extracting 'neera' to make it a money-spinner for coconut farmers in the state. Siddaramaiah said the government will also promote the value-added products of neera like palm syrup, palm jaggery and palm sugar. Coconut is grown in over 11.5 hectares in the state.

The other sops introduced by the chief minister for the farm sector include Rs 5 crore to agri universities for development of new seed varieties, Bhoo-chethana scheme-II will extend to irrigated lands, along with dry land farms, 100 transformer repair centres to ensure smooth, uninterrupted working of IP sets, Rs 152 crore for buffer stock of fertilizers, Rs 150 crore for distribution of seed and other equipment, Rs 500 crore for integrated watershed programme and Rs 25 crore for promoting organic farming in horticulture sector.