

Discussion on the 'Future of Neera' aired by Mathrubhumi Channel

With an aim to promote and propagate the possibilities of Neera, the Coconut Development Board has conducted a discussion titled '**Future of Neera**' in one of the prestigious programmes aired by **Mathrubhumi Channel**. The programme, '**Njangalkkum Parayanundu**' was packed to its full capacity as farmers, Neera technicians, and the who is who of the Companies and Federations from across the State gathered in.



The projected business from Neera is of Rs.1 lakh crore if we produce it from one percentage of the 18 crore coconut trees in Kerala. Do the state government is giving adequate support to this product? Njangalkkum Parayanundu debated with Mr. R. Heli, former director of Agriculture Department, Mr. Biju Joseph, Mr. Sabah Pulppatta, Chairman, Coconut Development Corporation, Mr. Babu Joseph, Adv. Mathunni, former PSC member, Mr. Vinod Kumar, Chairman, Palakkad Coconut Producers' Company, Mr. Shajahan Kanjiravilayil, Chairman of Kaipuzha Coconut Producers' Company Ltd (KCPCL), and coconut growers, research scholars and Neera technicians.

“Market war is a major concern,” said Mr. Vinod Kumar. “The production of Neera is easy but what is more difficult is finding a market space,” he added.

“This government is insulting the farmers by including Neera in the Abkari Act,” opined Adv. Mathunni. “At a time when Neera is produced in the state, there should be a change in the village

economy and the profit should be shared to farmers, technicians and those who are involved in the production,” stated Mr. Babu Joseph.

The Neera technicians shared their anxiety about being jobless even after getting professionally trained. Expressing hope they said the situation will change and there will be more opportunity when the excise department starts giving license to tap Neera.

Addressing the concern of the technicians, Mr. Vinod Kumar said, “A production unit can be run profitable only if they get license to tap atleast 10,000 trees.” The farmers, technicians and students who have participated in the debate raised their voice against the attitude of the government and criticized the excise department for denying license to the Federations.

