

MASS CONTACT: CHANDY SHOWS HOW IT'S DONE

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The Chief Minister gave Rs 10,000 each to 57 physically challenged women to conduct their marriage. Motorised wheel chairs were also distributed to physically challenged persons.

Mr Suresh, a coconut vendor from Venjaramoodu who suffered permanent disabilities in a mishap, was the first to receive an assistance of Rs. 75,000 from Mr Chandy for setting up a bunk shop.

Likewise, Mr Vetoor Prakashan, a CPI(M) worker hailing from Kazhakuttum, was also offered assistance for kidney treatment.

The Chief Minister was accompanied by the transport minister Mr. V.S.Sivakumar, the MP, Mr Shashi Tharoor, MLAs from Thiruvananthapuram and the Mayor, Ms K. Chandrika.

More than 1,000 officials representing various departments were present and 68 counters of different government departments and agencies were set up. Cheques were handed to the complainants on the spot.

Mass contact: Chandy shows how it is done

■ CM settles 20,000 complaints in a day

DC CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
NOV. 10

The Chief Minister, Mr Oommen Chandy, settled the grievances of more than 20,000 persons on the spot at the mass contact programme held in the state capital on Thursday.

He also distributed financial assistance worth ₹60 lakh for medical treatment to various people at the mega event held in the Chandrasekharan Nair stadium. The mass contact programme that began by 9 a.m. continued till late in the night.

Mr. Chandy spent more than 15 hours at the stadium giving a patient ear to all those who insisted on speaking to him personally in the jam-packed dais.

In between, he found a few minutes to eat the



CM Oommen Chandy at the public interaction. —DC

gruel provided by this son Chandy Oommen and drink tender coconut water. While inaugurating the event, the CM assured that the grievances of all those who turned up for the event would be considered before winding up the programme.

More than 30,000 appli-

cations, including about 11,000 that were received earlier, were dealt with at the mass contact programme. Hundreds of persons from distant places turned up at the Chandrasekharan Nair stadium right from the early hours of the day.

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■ Many hoped that CM Oommen Chandy would prove their saviour

Petitions pour in at contact prog

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THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
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They all had stories of tragedy and illnesses to tell. But hope brought them to the Chandrasekharan Nair stadium where the government conducted a mass contact programme on Thursday. While Rahim, 26, had travelled all the way from Varkala despite his paralysed legs to plead for shelter for his family, others like Moly, Rosamma and Vasantha, also physically challenged, had come from Kazhakuttum seeking jobs to be able to support their families.

Many hoped that Chief Minister Oommen Chandy would prove their saviour, helping them in their time of need. Those who were more sceptical, nevertheless pushed forward in

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the crowd, hoping to meet him and strike lucky.

Karunakaran Nair of Neyyatinkra and Kunjumon of Rajaji Nagar were among the fortunate lot who got the financial help they were looking for. While Karunakaran got ₹1 lakh for his heart surgery, Kunjumon got ₹10,000 for the treatment of his wife Beena, a heart patient. "I decided to come on the advice of our ward councillor and I am glad as I got some money, which will help me meet her treat-

ment expenses for a few months," said Kunjumon, a casual worker.

Rahim who makes a living selling cigarettes and beedis had come despite the fact that his many representations to the government and even Mr Chandy in person had gone unanswered. "I don't think I will get any response even this time," he said, despondently.

Sakunthala, who has been staging an indefinite stir in front of the secretariat over the last year along with members of other families evicted from the Plamoodu bund, was also sceptical about making any headway at the event. "The authorities have not done anything to help us," she said, while continuing to push ahead in the long queue to meet the CM, not ready to give up on hope as yet.