

'Extravagance in Mass Contact Programme will be Looked into'

The authorities have been asked to look into it and submit a report before November 23

Express News Service

Kochi: Chief Minister Oommen Chandy said that it was prompt on the part of the Finance Ministry to have pointed out the extravagance related to the mass contact programme.

The authorities have been asked to look into it and submit a report before November 23, he said.

"As soon as the Finance Ministry pointed out the extravagance in the programme, the authorities were asked to look into the issue. The report would be discussed in the next cabinet to be held on November 23," Chandy said while inaugurating the CM's mass contact programme here on Saturday.

On the criticism that

norms and procedures were not being followed while disbursing financial assistance, he said there could be some problems in verifying all the documents when on the spot decisions were being taken. "When documents of hundreds of people are being verified, one or two mistakes could happen and it is quite natural," he said.

"I agree that the medical assistance was given not adhering to the prescribed norms. But I have given them considering humanitarian values," Chandy said.

“ WHEN DOCUMENTS OF HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE ARE BEING VERIFIED, ONE OR TWO MISTAKES COULD HAPPEN AND IT IS QUITE NATURAL — Oommen Chandy, CM

He also noted that the mistakes if pointed out would be rectified.

He said that the mass contact programme would be held in all districts and the last one would be held in Alappuzha on December 22. "Already two mass contact programmes have been conducted at Kozhikode and T'Puram. There was good response from all sections of the society in these two programmes," he said. MLAs and MPs from Ernakulam district, District Collector Sheikh Pareeth, leaders of various political parties and

officials from various departments were present.

After the inauguration, Chandy began his contact programme hearing to the woes of hundreds of people and finding solutions to them. He started the programme by handing over financial assistance of ₹ 2 lakh to the father of a young girl who was run over by her school van after her uniform got entangled in the vehicle as she was alighting. He also disbursed financial assistance to four bed ridden people, who were brought in ambulances to the venue.

The venue at the Civil Station premises was overflowing with thousands of people eagerly waiting to find a solution to their unending problems.



Chief Minister Oommen Chandy slips through the rails to meet the physically challenged people at the Chief Minister's mass contact programme in Kochi | Manu R Mavelil

CM'S MASS CONTACT PROGRAMME

CHANDY TURNS A MESSIAH FOR THE POOR



Chief Minister Oommen Chandy listening to the woes of Ansar and his mother in the mass contact programme in Kochi on Saturday | P K Jeevan Jose



A volunteer bringing a physically challenged woman to the dais to meet the Chief Minister in the mass contact programme in Kochi on Saturday | P K Jeevan Jose

Express News Service

Kochi: It was the promise of fast settlement made by none other than Chief Minister Oommen Chandy that drew thousands of people to the mass contact programme held at the Collectorate Ground, Kakkanad on Saturday. Anxieties and pain were writ all over their faces while awaiting their turn to meet the Chief Min-

ister. Chandy started the programme by handing over a financial assistance of ₹ 2 lakh to the father of a young girl who was run over by her school van after her uniform got entangled in the vehicle as she was alighting.

The issues of physically challenged people were considered first. More than 500 such persons came to meet him apart from those under other categories.

Accident victims, amputees on wheel chairs, cancer patients, aged men and women, paraplegics and differently abled children, most of them accompanied by their family, thronged the venue.

In the midst of thousands of grieved people, four ambulances stood apart waiting for none other than the Chief Minister, in which were persons who have been

bed ridden for 15 to 18 years waiting for financial assistance from the government.

After the inauguration, Chandy stepped down from the stage and went up to the ambulances and listened to the woes of these persons.

For Girish Kumar from Ayavana Panchayat, bedridden for 18 years, the CM's direction for five cents and the promise of construction

of a house on it was a great solace. Ansar, from Edavanaparambu in Aluva, who got hurt in the spinal cord and in bed for the past 15 years, was another person who received an assistance of ₹ 25,000 and also pension for himself and mother.

Bedridden for the past ten years, Shani Peter from Moolampally got ₹ 25,000 as immediate relief. Kunjambu, bedridden for the past two

years, got a relief of ₹ 1.5 lakh already promised by the previous government.

The Civil Station premises was overflowing with thousands of people waiting at the different counters to find a solution to their unending problems. Lakshmi was in seventh heaven when she received a help of ₹ 20,000 on the spot from the Chief Minister. Her husband was bedridden for the past two and a half years. Owing to his disability, Velayudhan was lying down at the entrance to the stage waiting for the Chief Minister. "For me Chief Minister's mass contact programme was the last resort. Though I had contacted many authorities before, all my pleas fell on deaf ears," Lakshmi said. P A Antony, a paralysed person from Nayarambalam, got an assistance of ₹ 20,000. However, he said that the amount sanctioned would not meet his needs.

More than 7000 people lodged complaints till November 10 and additional 4500 complaints were registered on Saturday.