Kerala opposition legislators to court arrest Friday

All opposition legislators in Kerala will court arrest Friday here to press the state government to immediately implement the integrated food security (IFS) scheme.

Along with the lawmakers, top opposition party leaders will also court arrest.

Leader of the opposition Oommen Chandy said this extreme step is being taken to 'open the eyes' of the Achuthanandan government. He was speaking to reporters here Tuesday after a hurriedly called meeting of the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF).

'We will picket the state secretariat Friday and court arrest. We have come to know on Tuesday that the two communist parties in Kerala's Left Democratic Front (LDF) government have been fighting over who should head the implementation of the IFS and the meeting was called off,' said Chandy.

'It is immaterial who heads it, because the chief minister is above all the ministers. He is an abject failure and sadly the people are suffering,' said Chandy.

The two ruling Left Democratic Front partners differ on who should head the ministers' panel that will oversee the IFS scheme's implementation.

The CPI, which holds the agriculture portfolio, wants its minister to head the IFS scheme, while the CPI-M feels Achuthanandan should be at its helm.

'We would have been happy had the two parties squabbled on improving the quality of a particular programme, but that is not the case,' said Chandy.

This is the second LDF meeting that ended abruptly. The first one was called off mid-way May 14.

CPI state secretary Veliyam Bharghavan had earlier accused the chief minister of wanting to control all departments.

LDF convenor Vaikom Viswam, however, played down the divide in the LDF.

'This is an issue where different opinions have surfaced and we are discussing it in detail. The meeting had to be called off today (Tuesday) since the chief minister had to leave for Delhi. We will discuss this again,' Viswam told IANS.

The ruling LDF has 99 members, of which the CPI-M has 61 legislators and the CPI has 17 lawmakers, and the rest are from six other allies.

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