

Opposition leaders in Kerala court arrest

Leader of the opposition Oommen Chandy and several legislators belonging to the opposition Friday courted arrest here demanding speedy implementation of the integrated food security (IFS) scheme.

Arriving in front of the state secretariat here, the opposition leaders led by Chandy and state Congress president Ramesh Chennithala squatted and shouted anti government slogans.

Chandy said it was sad the parties holding power in the state were 'squabbling over non-issues' when the scheme was being implemented in other states.

The two ruling 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 Chief Minister V.S. Achuthanandan should be at its helm.

Two cabinet meetings and two meetings of the Left Democratic Front (LDF) failed to resolve the issue and the meeting had to be called off.

But Thursday evening the issue between the two allies was settled amicably and it was decided that Achuthanandan would head the panel.

'Who said there were problems? Only you had problems and all of you wrote as you wished about IFS and you can continue to write what you want,' said Achuthanandan Friday while responding to a reporter's query.

The arrested opposition leaders were taken in police vans to a nearby police camp and later released.

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