

## Nothing much to cheer for Karunakaran as he turns ninety

Veteran Congress leader K. Karunakaran wouldn't have been happy with the 'gift' given to him by the Congress headquarters in [New Delhi](#) as he turned ninety Saturday. The All India Congress Committee (AICC) has allocated only four posts to accommodate his followers in the state party unit, say media reports.

Karunakaran, who led the Congress government in the state four times, had given a jumbo list to the AICC to accommodate his followers in key party posts. However, Saturday's newspapers said he had been given one vice president, two general secretaries and one secretary. This is in stark contrast to what he held (seven district committees and several general secretaries) before leaving the Congress party in 2005.

Reacting to the reports, the veteran leader, who is known for his witty comments, said: 'Not fully correct. I came back to Congress only for one reason as it is the only party which sees India as one.'

Karunakaran, who floated his own Democratic Indira Congress - Karunakaran and later merged it with the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) before rejoining Congress without his son K. Muraleedharan, also said: 'Regional parties have only regional interest'.

Since his return to the Congress, Karunakaran had been maintaining a low profile, hoping that his followers would be accommodated. However, after six months he did say it would not be fair if his men were not accommodated.

State Congress chief Ramesh Chennithala dismissed reports that the list is out. 'Talks are only going on and please this is not journalism by discussing and spreading speculation about the list of Karunakaran's supporters being included. This is to be announced by Sonia Gandhi,' Chennithala told reporters Friday on his arrival from Delhi.

Karunakaran had a surprise visitor Friday evening when his bitter intra-party rival and leader of opposition in the state assembly Oommen Chandy called on him on the eve of Karunakaran's ninetieth birthday.

'I came to wish him all the best because I won't be here to take part in the 'navathi' celebrations (on turning 90) of Karunakaran,' said Chandy when asked if the list of Karunakaran's supporters was ready.

Meanwhile, the organisers of the 'navathi celebrations' are leaving no stone unturned to make this a grand event and has announced a year long programme.

'If the list is to be believed then this is bad news for the veteran and the news is that this appears to have spoiled the birthday party celebrations,' said a senior Congress leader on condition of anonymity.

Saturday morning, Karunakaran visited a temple while his supporters were busy with preparations for a lavish lunch at his home here.

His son Muraleedharan, who stayed with the NCP when his father returned to the Congress, may not turn up to greet him, party insiders say. That would be another reason for the veteran to be low in spirits on his birthday.

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