

Activate grama sabhas, says CM



Chief Minister Oommen Chandy tasting Neera, a product promoted by the Coconut Development Board, at a meeting of the Kerala State Innovation Council in Thiruvananthapuram on Wednesday.

- PHOTO: S.GOPAKUMAR

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THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Chief Minister Oommen Chandy has stressed the need to activate grama sabhas as instruments of development and participatory government.

Observing that grama sabhas in Kerala had largely failed to achieve their objectives, he called for steps to revive them as agents of change. He was addressing the first meeting of the State Innovation Council here on Wednesday.

Mr. Chandy underlined the need to identify fresh revenue sources and improve its service delivery mechanism to keep pace with the expectations of the people. The government, he said, had so far failed to tap non-traditional sources of tax and non-tax revenue. "On the one hand, financial problems, land-related issues, shortage of construction material and environment issues pose hurdles to development, while on the other, complexities and delays in official procedures hamper efficient service delivery," he said.

Mr. Chandy urged the innovation council to come up with a result-oriented, effi-

cient, timely, people-friendly service delivery mechanism to help the government reach out to the people in a better way. He mooted four thrust areas for the activities of the council, namely student entrepreneurship, traditional industries, agriculture and allied sectors and grama sabhas. Pointing to the success of the Young Entrepreneurship Summit held at Ernakulam recently, he called on the council to capitalise on the spirit of innovation it had unleashed and channelise it towards result-oriented activities. Mr. Chandy said traditional industries were in dire need of modernisation, increase in productivity and competitiveness.

He mooted the idea of harnessing the Kudmbasree Mission and other self-help groups to revive the agriculture and allied sectors.

Ministers P.K. Kunhalikutty and K.C. Joseph, and SIC members P.H. Kurian, V.N. Rajasekharan Pillai, T.P. Sreenivasan, G.Vijayaraghavan, T.K. Jose, Sanjay Vijayakumar, S.D. Shibulal, Radhakrishna Pillai, P.P. Chandrachoodan and Anil Gupta were among those present.