

Seaplane project shamed me: CM

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kottayam: Chief minister Oommen Chandy said the seaplane project, which failed to take off, had shamed him. The project was inaugurated with high hopes, he said here on Sunday.

NEERA PROJECT LAUNCHED

The project, inaugurated with much fanfare in June 2013, ran into trouble with fishermen dependent on the 'waterdrome' started an agitation, claiming that the seaplane operation would affect their livelihood.

Following the protest, the Cessna 206H amphibian aircraft was stationed at the Nedumbassery international airport, till it was flown to

Mumbai in December last. The state government had spent about Rs 7.28 crore on the project.

Inaugurating the neera project jointly launched by the excise department and coconut development board, the chief minister said when the seaplane project was opposed and terminated in Kerala, such amphibian aircraft have been a common sight in places like Maldives.

The interests of toddy tappers would be protected while implementing the project, Chandy said. Licence would be issued to more individuals for producing neera. The Rs 15 crore earmarked for the project in the last budget would be fully utilized, he said.

The chief minister distributed licences for neera production among the 14 coconut federations in the state.