

Opposition stages walkout in Assembly

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Members of the Opposition staged a walkout in the Assembly on Wednesday accusing the government of failing to initiate the housing scheme for the poor under the LIFE Mission.

P.K.Basheer, who gave notice for an adjournment motion, accused the government of upsetting decentralisation of powers by merging various housing schemes earlier implemented by local governments and issuing a directive to them against apportioning funds for such schemes.

A surfeit of orders and directives issued for implementing the housing scheme under the Life Mission has complicated the execution process and officials as well as elected members of local governments are confused, he said.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said that work on houses that were initiated earlier under various pro-

jects and have been remaining incomplete has been taken up as planned by the mission and again the focus would be on constructing houses for those having land but no house and also for the landless and houseless. Initial estimates have pegged the number of houses needed at 3.5 lakh, but it may go up to 5 lakh units.

Mr. Vijayan denied Mr.Basheer's allegation that the elected members have no role in the project. Various schemes have been integrated to avoid apportioning houses among ward members and ensure that it was reaching the real beneficiaries.

Leader of the Opposition Ramesh Chennithala said the scheme lacked life and the government was unable to deliver its promises in providing houses. Based on the government explanation, Speaker P.Sreeramakrishnan denied leave for the motion and the Opposition walked out in protest.