

Convene peace meet, says Ahamed

VS should take lead in Kannur

Special Correspondent

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Union Minister of State for External Affairs E. Ahamed has urged Chief Minister to take the initiative to convene an all-party peace meeting to end the continuing violence in Kannur.

Addressing a press conference here on Friday, Mr. Ahamed said the peace process should not be delayed any further and the Chief Minister should call the CPI(M) and the BJP leadership along with other mainstream parties. He had taken up the matter with Home Minister Kodayeri Balakrishnan who had promised to take necessary steps. It was the responsibility of the government to initiate the peace process and convince people that the police was functioning in an impartial manner.

There were complaints that the police was acting in a partial manner in the ongoing political clashes. Such a situation could only be termed as frightening and condemnable, he said. He recalled that the former Chief Minister the late E.K. Nayanar, during his term, had effectively intervened to restore peace on his request when the CPI(M)-BJP clashed. Political violence was effectively curbed during A.K. Antony's term as Chief Minister because the police was allowed to func-

• **Says police should act impartially**

• **Promises all cooperation from the IUML**

tion in an impartial manner, he said.

Mr. Ahamed refused to be drawn into any kind of controversy that would harm the peace process. His party, the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), would extend all cooperation to the government's efforts to restore peace in Kannur and end the politics of murder. Mr. Ahamed said there was no need to bring in Central forces, as the Kerala police was equipped to handle the situation. Mr. Ahamed said that arrangements were being made to airlift 180 tonnes of holy water from Saudi Arabia consequent on the royal decree issued by the Saudi government ordering its release. He had requested the Civil Aviation Ministry and Air India to lift the holy water at the earliest.

With regard to the State budget allocation of Rs.10 crore for minority welfare as per the Sachar Committee recommendations, Mr. Ahamed said the amount was paltry when compared to what other States had done.