Written by Administrator
Saturday, 20 November 2010 10:30 - Last Updated Saturday, 20 November 2010 10:37

**The New Indian Express       20.11.2010**

# Night shelters : Government wakes up

Express News Service

 BHUBANESWAR: The Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) Department has woken up to a Supreme Court directive to set up night shelters for homeless in three urban centres and embarked on a survey.

Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and Puri civic bodies have been asked to conduct a comprehensive study to identify homeless people living there by November 30.

The Supreme Court, hearing a case between PUCL and Government of India, had directed that all homeless people leaving without a shelter in the cities with a population of five lakh and more each need to be accommodated in night shelters.

At least one night shelter should be established for a population of one lakh, the apex court suggested.

Written by Administrator
Saturday, 20 November 2010 10:30 - Last Updated Saturday, 20 November 2010 10:37

Accordingly, a commission appointed by the SC fixed that Bhubaneswar should have seven night shelters, Cuttack have three and Puri at least two.

However, when the status was reviewed by the SC and the H&UD Department submitted its affidavit, the court was not satisfied with the steps. Another affidavit in this regard is slated to be filed by November 22.

To put up a better show before the SC, the Department seems to have gone into overdrive to complete the survey by this month-end.

It has directed the three civic bodies to ensure that survey teams take note of the places inhabited by the homeless.

The places include roadsides, pavements, construction sites, staircases of markets, arcades, temples, railway platforms and bus stops.

Written by Administrator
Saturday, 20 November 2010 10:30 - Last Updated Saturday, 20 November 2010 10:37

The three bodies have been asked to identify spaces for construction of the night shelters and seek alienation of land needed for such facilities.

Until the land is identified and shelters are constructed, the local bodies must point out community centres and other vacant government buildings to accommodate the homeless during the survey as an interim measure.

When the Department submitted in its affidavit that Kalyan Mandaps were being utilised for the purpose, it did not go down well with the court.