

Indian Express 10.12.2009

HP Cabinet approves Urban Rent Control Amendment Bill

Adopts recommendations of forestry, environment experts on climate change as state document

The Himachal Pradesh government approved an amendment to the existing rent control law of 1987 to protect and balance the rights of tenants. The new HP Urban Rent Control (Amendment) Bill aims to set a standard rent by the rent controller and ensure the right of a tenant for re-entry after the owner reconstructs the building.

The Cabinet approved the draft of amended bill at a meeting held in Shimla under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Prem Kumar Dhumal. The Bill will be introduced during the upcoming Winter Session of the Himachal Pradesh Assembly at Dharamshala.

The Cabinet also approved six months' extension—till June 15—for the unbundling of HP State Electricity Board (HPSEB). "The HPSEB has already been registered as a corporate body and the next six months will be required for vesting the HPSEB into a corporate entity, as presently all its assets and liabilities lay divested with the state government," said Additional Chief Secretary Avay Shukla.

The earlier deadline was December 15, 2009. Shukla said the government had the power to extend the process by six months without the Centre's approval.

The Cabinet also approved the adoption of the 16 recommendations that were made by a panel of environment and forestry experts during the National Conference on Forestry Solutions: Strategies for Mitigation and Adaptation of the Impacts of Climate Change, as a state document.

Shukla, who also looks after the charge of forest department, said the main recommendation was about asking the Centre to formulate a separate forest policy for hill states. "These recommendations will also be communicated to the Centre, asking for appropriate action to adopt them in the functioning of the forest department regarding climate change," he said.

The other recommendations include incorporating the concept of payment of environment services to local communities where development projects are proposed, long-term monitoring of the effects of climate change in different eco-zones and finally shifting the main focus of forestry planning towards water conservation by incorporating plantation programme at the level of watershed.

The Cabinet also granted approval to the revised food norms under the National Programme of Mid-Day Meal in state-owned educational

institutions by enhancing the expenditure from Rs 1.93 per meal to Rs 2.50 at primary level and from Rs 2.75 per meal to Rs 3.75 at the upper primary level.

It also approved a proposal for the launch of the Polythene Hatao, Paryavaran Bachao campaign to be launched throughout the state from December 21 to 27.