

Source : The Hindu

Date : 25.06.2009

Ombudsman orders setting up of more toilets in cities

Special Correspondent

KOCHI: The Ombudsman for Local Self-Government Institutions has asked each of the five city corporations in the State to propose a plan of action to redress the grievance of shortage of public latrines and comfort stations in these cities which have lakhs of residents as well as floating populations.

The directive came on a public-interest petition lodged with the Ombudsman, M.R. Hariharan Nair, by D.B. Binu, general secretary of Human Rights Defence Forum.

The Ombudsman had summoned the secretaries the city corporations. The Thiruvananthapuram corporation secretary stated that the corporation had allocated Rs.50 lakh for building public latrines and mobile toilets. He was asked to come up with proposals to set up latrines at schools and "get a survey done by the Health Officer to locate places where additional toilets can be established and whether adequate space is available under the control of the corporation."

The Kollam secretary, who told the Ombudsman that there were only nine latrines in the city, was asked to give instructions to the Corporation Health Officer to submit proposals for more latrines.

The Ombudsman was told by the Kochi secretary that there were only nine public latrines in the city. "There is need for establishing many more when the floating population in the city and its total area is considered," the Ombudsman said. The secretary was told to assess the people's needs for latrines and submit reports about proposed latrines. "The corporations of Kozhikode and Thrissur are yet to apply their minds to aspects pointed out in the complaint," the

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Written by Administrator

Friday, 26 June 2009 07:13 - Last Updated Friday, 26 June 2009 07:23

Ombudsman said. They were asked to file statements about the complaint of shortage of public latrines and submit effective proposals for redressing the grievances at the next sitting of the Ombudsman scheduled for August 3.