

# Manmohan announces livelihood plans for Andaman and Nicobar

One daily wage job to be provided for a year to each family affected by the tsunami

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**PORT BLAIR:** The Andaman and Nicobar Islands administration has said it will provide at least one daily wage job for a year to each family affected by the tsunami.

About 6,313 families have been identified for the scheme after a door-to-door survey was conducted.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Wednesday announced lifting of the ban on recruitment in the Union Territory to fill the 650 vacant Government posts. He said there would be an increase in the number of anganwadi workers.

The administration has also drawn an action plan for agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries and rural development. The tsunami caused extensive damage to agriculture land, affecting about 6,000 farmers. At least 11,010 hectares are estimated to be damaged, of which 1,730 hectares is under paddy and other field crops, 9,107 hectares under plantation crops and 400 hectares under root crops.

## Short-term package

The Centre has approved a short-term package for Rs. 235.82 crore for reclamation of soil and rehabilitation of agriculture. An additional Rs. 3.72 crore has been provided for implementation and monitoring of the package. The time period for the short-term package is two years, while a long-term package of Rs. 257.90 crore is under the Centre's consideration. Much debris still needs to be cleared before initiating reclamation and re-cropping measures for plantation crops. The proposed cost of site clearance of 9,107 hectares is Rs. 9.99 crore at the rate of Rs. 15,000 per hectare.



**A GLANCE AT HISTORY:** Prime Minister Manmohan Singh during his visit to the Cellular jail in Port Blair on Thursday. - PHOTO: PTI

While clearance work has started in the major islands, transportation of heavy machinery to Katchal, Kamorta and Teressa has been hindered by damaged jetties. Most of the debris is being cleared manually.

Salt and sand have been deposited on the topsoil in most affected areas. Scraping of salt is being taken up at a cost of Rs.

25,000 per hectare. Only about one-third of the affected rice and plantation area has been considered for the operation, at an estimated cost of Rs. 8.85 crore.

The survey work has been completed, and major scraping work will be taken up during 2006-07. The leaching process will also be carried out to drain insoluble salts. The areas will be

then identified for application of gypsum.

A package worth about Rs. 26.28 crore, proposed for animal husbandry activities in the tsunami-affected areas, is awaiting Central approval.

Under the employment generation and livelihood programme, 10,000 affected families will be assisted in rear-

ing poultry, ducks, goats, pigs and cattle. This is in addition to a huge package announced by the Centre to rehabilitate fishermen.

The December 26, 2004, tsunami left 86 dead and 3,077 missing in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Infrastructure was badly damaged and economic activities were crippled.