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## 35,268 houses built for the tsunami-hit: Minister

Rs.82.56 crore sanctioned for creating basic facilities in the habitations

Special Correspondent

**CHENNAI:** Till February-end, as many as 35,268 houses have been constructed for the tsunami affected, Revenue Minister I. Periasamy informed the Assembly on Friday.

"Out of this, NGOs have constructed 28,064 houses and the government has constructed 7,204 houses. In addition to this, 6,019 houses have been taken up for poor families not affected by tsunami including Irulas (Scheduled Tribes, Cuddalore) and for families living close to the sea (Kanyakumari district), of which 5,580 were completed as on Feb-

ruary 29, 2008," he said.

Initiating the debate on the demands for grants for his department, he said when the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam government took over, the number of houses completed was 8,406.

The government had also sanctioned Rs.82.56 crore for basic amenities such as water supply, street lights, approach roads, internal road, sanitation and electricity connection to houses in the habitations.

The government was also taking up a massive scheme of reconstructing houses in vulnerable areas along the coast.

"Around 25,234 houses will be constructed from 0 to 200 metres from the high tide line under the Rajiv Gandhi package, which includes 9,640 under Indira Awaraz Yojana," he said.

The existing houses have to be more than 10 years old as on January 1, 2006.

(Another 29,834 houses will be constructed from 201m-1 km from the coastline with aid from the World Bank aided Emergency Tsunami Reconstruction programme.)

A survey of such houses is now under way. For the survey and for acquiring land wherever required, the government has

sanctioned Rs.30.12 crore, he said. The government also will build 150 km of evacuation routes, 78 evacuation shelters and 997 early warning systems.

"The government has sanctioned Rs.552 crore for taking up construction of 22,000 houses with the assistance of the Centre in 11 districts. The houses will be built by the Rural Development department in rural areas and by the Slum Clearance Board in the urban areas. So far, by March 2008, the tender process is complete for 14,880 houses to be built by the Rural Development department and 2556 houses by the Slum Board," he said.