

- Tribal Council of Nicobar needs to be given more autonomy for the all around development of the tribal areas.

12. Opening of wood based industries

12.1 Issued raised by Shri Manoranjan Bhakta and Shri B.P.Ray:

- The two wood based factories at Port Blair have been closed for quite some time leading to miseries for the employees.

12.2 The LG briefed the Committee on the steps taken by the Administration so far.

13. Remarks of Home Minister

Stating that he had gained during this visit first hand information and understanding about the critical issues facing the Andaman & Nicobar Islands, the Home Minister summed up the main decisions taken during the meeting:

- Grant-in-aid to the Panchayat Raj Institutions will be increased from Rs.12 crore to Rs.50 crore and for Port Blair Municipal Council from Rs.3.60 crore to Rs.7.20 crore.
- Investment for slum development schemes will be doubled.
- A&N Administration will give a high priority to set up water treatment plants where this facility has not so far been fully provided so that safe drinking water is made available in all inhabited islands.
- Road connectivity in rural areas in A&N Islands needs a high priority in the overall National Planning.
- Ministry of Home Affairs shall strongly recommend increase in the number of PEG and LPG Distribution Centres so as to reduce impact on price of these essential commodities on account of higher transportation costs to distant Islands.