
IDPs to move into housing units

Monday, 09 March 2009

Last Updated Monday, 09 March 2009

by P.Krishnaswamy A cross section of the Wannu civilians who had fled terrorist held areas and now housed in 12 transit camps in Vavuniya would be moved to the newly constructed semi-permanent housing units in the 1000-acre Kadigamar Welfare village in Menik Farm a week ahead of the forthcoming Sinhala/Tamil New Year with all necessary facilities, Rishad Bathiudeen, Minister of Resettlement and Disaster Relief Services told the "Sunday Observer". Already 2000 families comprising about 10,000 such people are housed in the village. Most of the transit camps are in school buildings, student hostels and educational institutions and these will be handed back to the authorities concerned for resuming normal educational activities after these refugees were moved out from there, he said, adding that refugees coming to Vavuniya would no longer be housed in school buildings instead, in temporary camps that will be pitched when necessary. The UNHCR collaborating with the government agencies has already pitched 1000 such tents, he said. As decided during a recent visit to the welfare village by Senior Presidential Advisor Basil Rajapaksa MP, accompanied by him, 3000 additional housing units would also be constructed before the end of this month in anticipation of a large number of refugee families from Mullaitivu where they are now detained against their wishes, being trapped under LTTE blockade, the Minister said. All necessary assistance and services of engineers and other technical staff attached to the Building Department, Electricity Board and other relevant government institutions have been mobilised to complete the work expeditiously. The government was also releasing all necessary funds immediately. The process of resettling the families in their own native villages will begin before too long, after de-mining the areas and providing the infrastructure for development and rehabilitation. The Presidential Secretariat, his ministry and all relevant authorities were engaged in formulating plans for resettling the displaced families, within a short time, the Minister said. Meanwhile, sources of the Vavuniya District Secretariat said that families housed at the Kadigamar Welfare village were being provided dry rations under the World Food Program (WFP) aid and other consumer items by the government and INGOs. Unlike in transit camps, families can cook their own meals in their housing units. They are being provided all basic facilities including water and sanitary facilities. Medical teams, comprising doctors, nurses and attendants were visiting them everyday. Some of the refugees who have had an attack of chickenpox have been quarantined at the Poovarasankulam Divisional Hospital for medical treatment and care, the sources said. Courtesy: Sundayobserver.lk