

Inter-State exchange programme to be held in Nov

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KOLKATA: The state government is set to host the Inter-State Exchange Programme (ISEP) in November, where it would get an opportunity to showcase its good work. The decision was taken after a team from Delhi from the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), who visited West Bengal on a three-day tour, praised the state government for successfully carrying out projects under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). The team met with the Minister for Panchayat and Rural Development Subrata Mukherjee and senior officials of his ministry, and chief secretary Basudeb Bandyopadhyay. The MoRD team members visited three districts – Bankura, Burdwan and Nadia – and were amazed to see the functioning of grassroot level institutions such as the Gram Panchayat. They appreciated the political and administrative will to carry out all-round development under the MGNREGA. They were overwhelmed to see how MGNREGA had helped the leprosy patients in

Bankura to come out of the stigma and become economically self-reliant. 93 leprosy patients in 22 families are engaged in the cultivation of Alphonso mangoes and Nagpur mandarin oranges. Patients who are cured generally do not get rehabilitated, but the project has given them back their self respect. Similarly, the fly ash brick project has helped women belonging to self-help groups. State-of-the-art brick kilns, which cause less pollution, have been set up in Bankura and Nadia. The 'MGNREGA bricks' cost Rs 4 each and are used to construct rural roads. The excess bricks are sold in the open market. These bricks are cheaper than the one available in the market. The life style of the women working in the project has improved after they became financially strong. The MoRD team appreciated the unique application of Vetiver grass to prevent soil erosion in Nadia. The grass will be planted along the riverside covering an area of 723 km. Chief Minister Mamata banerjee gave the name 'Sabujayan' to the project. 53 nurseries have

been set up in Nadia to develop this grass which is brought from Tamil Nadu. The grass grows very fast and its roots go as deep as 20 feet holding the soil. Experts of Vetiver Network International had visited the nurseries and expressed their satisfaction. The team from Delhi observed that the involvement of people in the projects has helped improve their livelihood. They also found that some of the officials of the department – especially two BDOs, Supravat Chakraborty working in Bankura and Babulal Mahato working in Nadia – went out of their way to ensure proper implementation of the projects. They also praised the fact that the issue of malnutrition in children has been addressed. The team found that even remote villages had amenities like roads, small bridges and culverts making communication for the rural populace easy. Opposition parties, during the election campaign, seemingly failed to understand the impact of these projects on people.