

## Vetiver grass to check soil erosion in Nadia

**N**adia will soon become the country's first district to plant Vetiver, a grass which helps to check land erosion due to flood.

The project was inaugurated by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on November 23, 2015 at Tehatta where she had named the project as Sabujayan. The Panchayat and Rural Development is carrying out the project under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). The estimated cost of the project is Rs 31 crore.

A review meeting was held on Friday at Rabindra Bhavan in Krishnanagore. Around 500 people representing gram panchayat, panchayat samity and zilla parishad were present at the meeting along with block development officers. It was decided that from the end of

February, the grass will be planted along six rivers covering a distance of 744 km. The root of the grass goes below 20 feet and they are excellent in preventing soil erosion. Once successful, the project will be used in other flood prone districts.

The rivers in Nadia along which the grass will be planted are Churni, Mathabhanga, Jalangi, Ichamati, Bhagirathi and Padma. All these rivers are flood prone and huge amount of money had been spent to check soil erosion.

Vetiver grass grows in Tamilnadu. As it will be costly to bring the grass, more than 50 nursery have been set up where the grass is grown. It is also used to make handicrafts items.

The international body that looks after Vetiver plantation globally is called The Vetiver Network International, where

India has three representatives. The veteran Vetiver expert P Vincent, one of the members of the international body came to Nadia some months ago and lauded the plantation. An NGO Groupm for Rural Alternative Movement is involved in the project.

“The project is an unique one and we are getting good results. It will help in soil stabilisation,” a senior official of Panchayat and Rural Development department said.

