



The first administrative meeting in the second stint at Narayangarh

The first administrative meeting at Narayangarh, Paschim Medinipur, where several beneficiaries received agricultural benefits including *Krishak Ratna* awards from Mamata Banerjee, the Hon'ble Chief Minister of West Bengal on June 13, 2016. ■

Agriculture can be our most rewarding future industry

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West Bengal has won the *Krishi Karman* award from Government of India, beating all other states in oil-seed production during this year. In fact the state has won the prize for the last four consecutive years. I am thankful to all the stakeholders including the farmers. And we recognize the farmers through annual award of *Kriti Krishak*, *Krishak Ratna* and *Krishak Samman*.

In these days of intensified weather aberration like inundation, drought, hailstorm, pest attack to crops, the Govt. has provided premium subsidy for Crop Insurance Programme to protect the farmers. Moreover, we have already established 141 nos. of Automated Weather Stations (AWS) in different agricultural farms of the state to generate weather data to support the farmers. Now a days we work on war footing in respect of distribution of cheques, agril. inputs and arrangement of alternative crops, rice seedlings as well as rice seeds to the affected farmers.

Another worth mentioning subject that we stress is Organic agriculture. We have already earmarked important Govt. Farms to develop Organic Package of Practises. We try to improve soil health, food safety and economic benefit of the farmers.

We pay importance to high value agriculture like encouraging farmers to grow *Gobindobhog* or *Badsahbhog* at South Bengal and *Tulaipanji* at North Bengal. The Department has already applied for GI for *Gobindobhog*, *Tulaipanji* and *Kalonunia*. We focus

on popularising table flower, high value vegetables like coloured bell pepper, coloured cabbage, broccoli, cherry tomato etc.

And finally, we focus on innovative ideas and try to implement them in the farmer's field to support him to make his profession remunerative and attracting to him as well as his next generation. We stress on implementation of Custom Hiring Centres in more meaningful way to empower the farmers and develop skill and resource within the village.

All our efforts aim to improve the resource base within the village and empower the farmers to utilize those resources for the ultimate benefit of themselves. ■

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The first press conference : a historic milestone



"I have always believed that the real history is made by ordinary people"

Our Homage to Bengal's Mother, the eminent writer Mahasweta Devi.



The first press conference of Mamata Banerjee in her second term as the Hon'ble Chief Minister of West Bengal on May 27, 2016 at Nabanna. Photo : Ashok Mazumder

Agriculture can be our most rewarding future industry -Purnendu Basu, MIC, Agriculture, W.B.



Sir, Hearty congratulations and warm welcome to you for being our Hon'ble MIC of Agriculture.

Basu : Thank you.

Sir, this time, how do you plan to proceed ahead?

Basu : You see, our near future holds the greatest prospects in the field of agriculture. Days are gone when you take agriculture as subsistence profession only; rather we have already started work towards establishing the idea that agriculture can be our most rewarding future industry. Today's agriculture is not only restricted to cultivation of rice, jute or pulses, rather we concentrate on considering agriculture holistically where, the farmer will think to do business with production from his crops, vegetables & fruits, food processing, animal husbandry and fishery. Hence, we are inclined to a sustainable development beneficial to the farmers and village by minimizing the difference of income between the urban and rural. For the last five years we try to work for a hike in our farmer's income through reducing the cost of production, diversifying the production system, extending the best technology to the farmers and the annual income of the farmers has increased by 75% during 2014-15 over that of 2010-11. We want to continue this trend.

West Bengal is in one of the most prime positions for agriculture among all the states in India. Behind this success lies the planned approach of the Department of Agriculture along with the immense dedication of the farmers of the state. Sri Purnendu Basu, the Hon'ble MIC, Agriculture, W.B. shared his views by an interview with the Editor of 'News Letter'.

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