

DEC, NGO bag World Bank grant for village upgrade

Aiman Mustafa

New Delhi

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Delhi College of Engineering along with an NGO has bagged a prestigious World Bank grant from among 4,000 entries for developing a village in Jaipur, Rajasthan based on environment friendly fuels as the primary source of energy.

The grants each comprising over half a crore rupees, are awarded to 200 agencies across the world for various development projects. The project titled "Fences for fuel in Virat Nagar Block of Jaipur District" has been sanctioned to Human People to People India, an international membership non-profit organization.

The grant sanctioned by the World Bank is \$1.2 lakh.

"The project is aimed at promoting 4 aspects to assure a sustainable way of life for small farmers and the land that supports them. The 4 aspects are renewable energy, erosion control and soil improvement. Women's empowerment and poverty reduction," explained professor Naveen Kumar, the coordinator of bio-diesel research at the college, who was actively involved with the design of the proposal was submitted to the World Bank. The main objective of the project is promote cultivation of the Jatropha plant the seeds of which are

used to develop bio-diesel as fences on the field of Virat Nagar Block.

It is supposed to be the first of its kind being carried out in the country. The project will involve the villagers in growing the Jatropha fences and also setting up a bio-diesel production unit with farmers associations in 40 villages.

This will involve a total population of around 25000.

Speaking to *Newsline*. Professor P.B. Sharma, principal DCE, said "Apart from providing technical education to students, we are trying to address issues of national importance like decentralized energy production, encouragement and renewable energy, reduction of air pollution and promotion of the national bio-diesel mission in India."

The DCE will provide technical input for the establishment of a bio-diesel production unit and help in starting up its initial production

The college will also assist in commissioning and trial running of all processing equipment and delivering consultancy services for any aspects of work related to bio-diesel production.

LOOK AT FARMERS AS PARTNERS IN DEVELOPMENT, SAYS SWAMINATHAN

Special Correspondent

The Hindu, 21/ 8/2006

The draft national policy for farmers put on the Government website is already under debate and it broadly provided 24 policy prescriptions to ensure the livelihood security of the farmers, said M.S. Swaminathan, Chairman of the National Commission on Farmers

The cost-risk return structure of farming is getting adverse leading to increasing rural indebtedness and suicides, Dr. Swaminathan said. He called for a symphony of approach between the governments, NGOs, Panchayats and agricultural universities to achieve what he described as an “ever-green revolution” Dr. Swaminathan was delivering the Rajiv Gandhi Memorial Lecture at the valedictory of two day national seminar organized here under the aegis of the Academy of Grass roots Studies and Research of India and the Rajiv Rural Development Foundation.

Some the draft policy prescriptions are expanding the scope of the minimum support price (MSP) to cover all crops, linking the cross diversification programme with the MSP, establishment of a market risk stabilization fund to protect farmers during periods of violent price fluctuations, creation of an Agricultural Risk Fund to insulate farmers from drought and other climatic aberrations widening the scope of agricultural insurance, insurance by seed companies in the case of GM crops,

setting up of an Indian Trade Organization to help Government operate livelihood security box, making it mandatory for states to setup farmers commissions to serve as a voice of farmers and as think tanks to advise the states.

Dr. Swaminathan said the draft policy recommended observance of the agricultural year 2006-07 as the year of farmers to restore their faith in farming. He pointed out that the recommendations of the national policy were simple and affordable provided there was a change “in our mind set” to look at farmers as partners in development than looking at them as small beneficiaries of Government programmes.” The draft policy also suggested that the Government provided to farm graduate low interest loans, venture capital funds, wasteland for setting up ‘agriclinics’ and agribusiness centers and knowledge centers.

“Register Farm Practitioners”

Another recommendation was to accord recognition to farm graduates to function as ‘registered farm practitioners’ as in the case of physicians and veterinary doctors. He underlined the need for a few ‘center of excellence’ in agriculture (crop, animal husbandry, fishery and forestry) on the model of IITs and IIMs.

RUN UP TO 2010 COMMONWEALTH GAME

Govt. to release Rs. 57 cr for rural- area development

Shwetank Dubey

The Statesman, 26th August 2006

NEW DELHI, Aug 25: Now with only 1,500 days left for the Commonwealth Games 2010, every body is gearing up for it. The latest addition are the politicians from outer and rural Delhi, who have asked the Delhi development minister, Mr Raj Kumar Chauhan, to have a word with the Union sports minister so as to hold some events in their constituency leading to some development works which can come in, the same way east Delhi has been benefited.

Sources in the ministry stated that while Mr. Chauhan agreed to release around Rs. 57 crore for development of rural areas in the Rural Development Board meeting held today.

While the Delhi government has released funds for development of rural areas, it wants to kill two birds with one stone in this regard, the first being area development ahead of CWG, the second reason for release of funds is stated to be initiation of water harvesting programmes so that water level can be maintained as well as improving the drainage system for meeting the Yamuna Action Plan criterion for setting up of mini sewage treatment plants.

Senior government officials stated that most funds released by the RDB pertain to development work in ponds and other small water bodies so that water is retained in them during monsoon when it rains.

“ In all rural areas, the main source of water comes from tube wells which results in lowering of the water table. It is a known fact that ground water levels in the capital have gone down by as much as 10 feet in the past decade and adequate measures need to be taken to restore it. If all ponds and small water bodies are developed, they will store water resulting in raising the ground water level,” said an official.

Apart from this, as part of the Yamuna Action Plan around 188 mini STPs have been planned to be setup by the Delhi Jal Board. “If the drainage system can be put in place, then sewage can be diverted to the mini STPs resulting in only treated waste being released in the Yamuna. Twenty villages have already been identified for setting up the STPs while land acquisition is in the final phase of being done,” added an official.

Bombard Me With Questions: Aiyar

Seeks youth's Involvement in Programmes of Ministries

Anita Joshua

New Delhi: Union Youth Affairs & Sports Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar has sought the help of the Parliamentary Forum on Youth to make youth development Central to the national agenda.

Besides seeking their active involvement in national programmes run by his two ministries the other being Panchayati Raj – Mr. Aiyar wants members of the fledgling forum to “bombard” him with questions in Parliament to make an impact on policy making.

After meeting the forum on Thursday last, Mr. Aiyar wrote to each of the 16 members on Friday urging them to use the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) and the Panchayati Raj network to accelerate youth empowerment and participation in nation building.

Billing the NYKS and the Panchayati Raj network as “two well-prepared and well established youth which severally and jointly, especially if synergised, could serve as readymade vehicle for a dramatic acceleration of youth empowerment and participation in nation building” he said together this put an “army of atleast a crore young men and women” at the service of the forum.

Besides, there were the youth enrolled in the National Service Scheme, Bharat Scouts & guides, National cadet Corps and the Youth Hostels movement.

This readymade network spread across the country, according to the minister can be used by the members of the forum to promote four key programmes of his two ministries in their respective states.

Promotion of these programmes would not only helps the four focus areas of the forum- education, health, sports and employment- but also enable members to spread their effort across all 29 subjects identified for devolution to Panchayati Raj Institutions in the eleventh schedule of Constitution.

Since the forum itself was set up recently by Lok Sabha Speaker Somanath Chatterjee to generate awareness and debate with in the legislature on youth affairs, the Minister wants the members to make the best use of this indulgence”

Mr. Aiyar would like the MPs to use other tools available to them to additional information and commitments from the Ministry, be it through half hour discussions or under any other “substantive motion.”