



Chief Minister Responds

Ms. Mamata Banerjee is the first lady to become the Chief Minister of West Bengal. Reputed as a 'firebrand' orator and a person who does not procrastinate, she holds the key portfolio of Health and Family Welfare in the Government.

When the officials of INPPC led by the Chairman PDG Deepak Kapur met her on June 7, 2011 at the Writers Building in Kolkata, it was adding a new date to history. For Rotary it was an important event as urgent steps had to be taken to prevent the polio virus from spreading in the State and also migrating to the neighbouring states. The one case of polio reported during 2011 has been a thorn in the flesh for the managers of the polio eradication programme in India and this includes all the partners in the eradication drive. The commitment from the Government of West Bengal to take more effective steps to combat the polio virus was urgently needed and this had to be had from the Chief Minister herself.

When INPPC Chairman Deepak Kapur, Lori Calvo from UNICEF and PDG Siddhartha Bose, Member INPPC trooped into her office with other officials from WHO-NPSP and UNICEF, they had prepared themselves for a 15 minutes meeting with the Chief Minister. But it lasted for well over 40 minutes! She is reported to have said during her run up to the post, "We are not selling dreams. We have to work very hard to meet the aspirations of the people." This determination was evident in her resolve to eradicate polio from the State.

June 26, 2011 will see the launch of another campaign against polio by the Chief Minister in Kolkata. She will be appealing to the citizens to make the polio eradication drive a



Ms. Mamata Banerjee, Chief Minister of West Bengal discussing with the officials on polio eradication.

people's movement and is reaching out to the Muslim community to participate in the programme. Video conference will be held with the District Magistrates and Chief Medical Officers highlighting the seriousness of the issue. She will demonstrate that the government is determined to provide the leadership and resources to end the menace of polio in the State.

Steering Committees for polio eradication will be formed with the Chief Secretary of the State heading them. The heads of Health, Panchayati Raj, Social Welfare and Urban Development Departments will be members along with representatives from WHO, UNICEF and Rotary International. The reports of these committees will be scrutinised by the Chief Minister herself. In addition, operational groups will be formed under the Additional Chief Secretary, Health and Family Welfare and the reports that this groups give every week will be taken up by the District Magistrates and Chief Medical Officers of the State.

The Chief Minister Ms. Mamata Banerjee volunteered to administer the drops to children on June 25, 2011 so that the pictures can be prominently publicised in the media and billboards the next day when the campaign gets a big start it needed in West Bengal. People believe that she can show the same strength in unseating the polio virus from West Bengal like she did to the earlier government. She has shaken the foundation of complacency in West Bengal and her earlier stint as the Railway Minister will help her in ensuring that the polio eradication drive is not derailed in the state.



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