

Zinc-enriched paddy variety gains popularity

BSS, Rajshahi

BRRI dhan-62, a zinc-enriched paddy variety, has started gaining popularity among farmers in the region including its vast Barind tract during the last couple of years.

The newly innovated paddy variety has opened up a door of enormous prospects of mitigating zinc and protein deficiency besides fighting diarrhea and pneumonia-induced childhood deaths and stunting.

Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) released the variety for all over the country after a latest breakthrough in research in the field. It's a short-duration high-yielding variety of rice which could be cultivated in Aman season.

The BRRI breeders developed the hi-zinc rice with support from Harvest Plus, which is a global bio-fortification mission.

Dr Aminul Islam, Chief Scientific Officer of BRRI here told BSS that the BRRI 62 has been the most-discussed rice variety as it is a zinc-fortified breed and has been developed to meet the necessary requirement of micronutrient for a human body coupled with ensuring food security.

He mentioned that the variety has been developed by genetically crossing with local variety but



it's not genetically modified rice.

Each kilogram of rice of BRRI dhan-62 contained 19 mg of zinc and 9 percent of protein which will ensure high nutrition and will play a significant role in prevention of diseases. Zinc also played a vital role in prevention of liver-related diseases.

Narrating the salient features of the newly developed variety, Dr Islam said zinc, iron and vitamin-A are the three most vital micronutrients, deficiency of which hampers children's natural growth and decrease their disease prevention capacity.

In Bangladesh, over 40 percent children under five are stunted while an estimated 44 percent children of the same age group are at risk of zinc deficiency.