



**GAZIPUR:** Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury addressing in BRRI Research Review workshop in BRRI auditorium recently. Photo: News Today

## Scientists urged to make Bangladesh a food exporting country

Our Correspondent GAZIPUR, Feb 10: Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury urged the scientists of Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) to make Bangladesh a food exporting country by developing more stress tolerant high yielding rice varieties. The minister made this call while she was inaugurating the annual research review workshop of Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) as the chief guest on Sunday held at the BRRI auditorium in Gazipur. Member of the Parliament of Gazipur-2 Jahid Ahasan Rassel was the special guest on the occasion while Executive Chairman of the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council Dr Kamal Uddin and Director General of the Department of Agricultural Extension Abu Hanif Mia were the guests of honour with Dr S M Nazmul Islam, Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture in the chair. BRRI Director General, Dr Jiban Krishna Biswas presented the key-note paper of the workshop titled as 'Research Progress 2012-13' and BRRI Director (Admin and CS) Dr Shahjahan Kabir also spoke. Experts and officials from different government and non-government organizations including BARC, DAE and IRRI along with universities as well as farmers' representatives attended the workshop. She said the trend to fulfil the people's nutritional need through attaining self-sufficiency in food production should be enhanced. She said 'our continual effort of agricultural development is to make the country a food exporting country ensuring food security as well as to make it a food surplus one keeping enough food in the storage system for hazardous times.' The minister said, subsidy should be given to agricultural inputs like fertilizer, seeds and irrigation providing concessions to agricultural loans and necessary measures will be taken to ensure fair price of the agricultural produces so that grower farmers are not deprived. She stressed on development of varieties tolerant to salinity, drought and submergence mentioning about priority of agricultural research toward discovering genome sequences of different cash crops like jute. Research activities of BRRI done over the last year along with the significant information related to food security of the people of Bangladesh were the focal points of the five-day-long workshop. At present BRRI varieties cover 80 percent of the total rice area that accounts for 90 percent of the total rice production of the country. BRRI varieties have played a vital role in making Bangladesh a food surplus country by producing enough rice it requires. The most popular BRRI developed high yielding Boro varieties include BRRI dhan28 and BRRI dhan29. In Aman season BR11 is equally popular to the farm level. To face the challenge of climate change in recent times BRRI has developed cold, submergence, drought and saline tolerant varieties that include BRRI dhan36, BRRI dhan40, BRRI dhan41, BRRI dhan51, BRRI dhan52, BRRI dhan53, BRRI dhan54, BRRI dhan55, BRRI dhan56 and BRRI dhan57 etc. Among the most recent BRRI varieties BRRI dhan62 is released as the world's first rice enriched with iron and zinc.